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# ISLAND PATTY

MARY E. Q. BRUSH





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# ISLAND PATTY

BY

MARY E. Q. BRUSH

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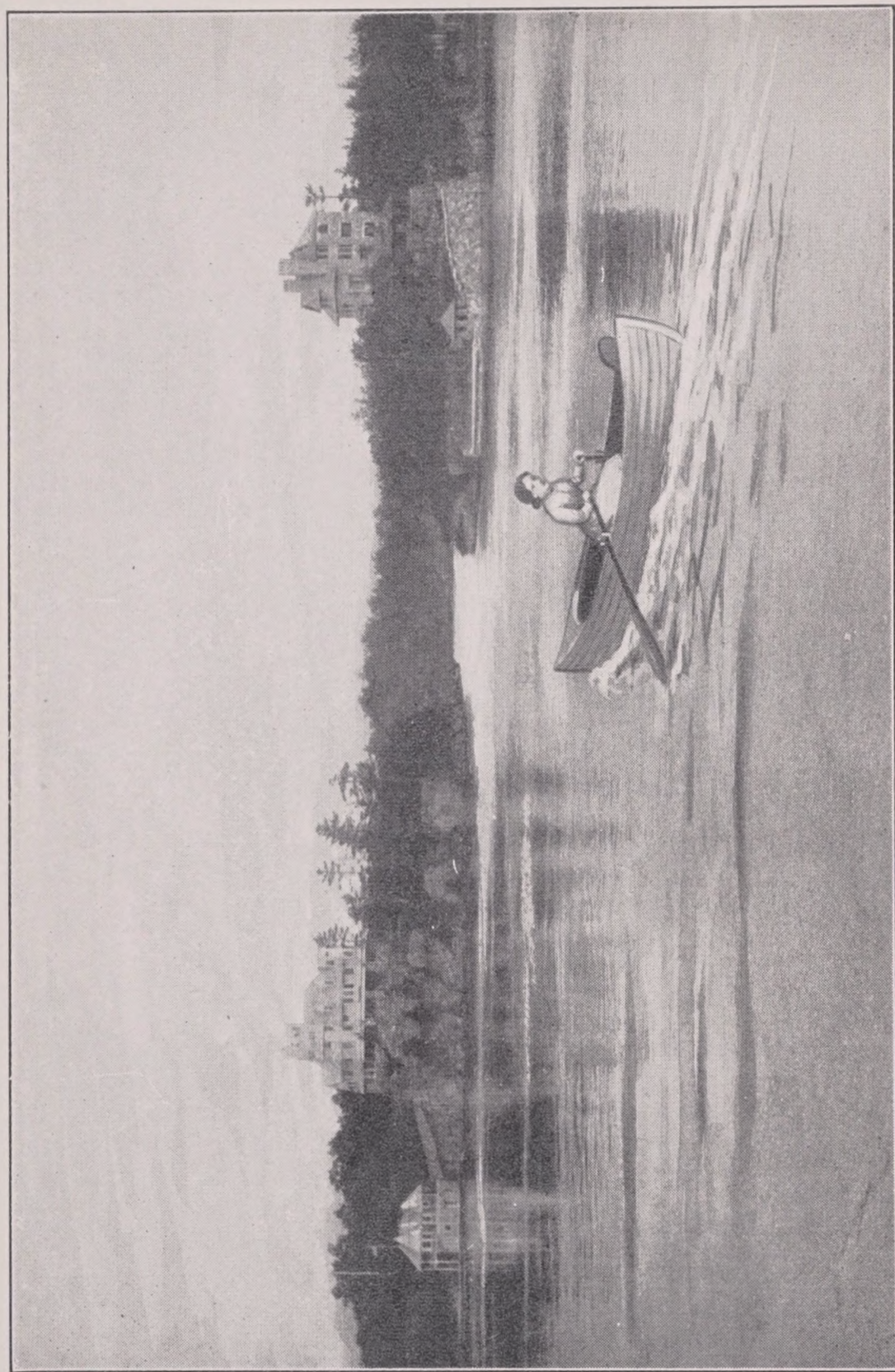
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PATTY WAS ROWING RAPIDLY ACROSS TO THE JUDGE'S ISLAND.

# ISLAND PATTY.

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## CHAPTER I.

A HOARSE sound made prolonged echoes across the river; it was the whistle of the big steamboat, the "St. Lawrence," on her daily trip from Clayton, bringing the evening load of passengers and mail. Hardly was the noise lost among the rocky islets and watery labyrinths of the beautiful river before Patty Graham dropped the flatiron with which she was smoothing out a tattered pink apron belonging to one of the twins, and, bareheaded, with her fine flaxen hair flying in the breeze, ran down the stony path leading to the water's edge.

Like a brood of noisy chickens the children followed her, and clamorous and quarrelsome, as was their wont, scattered themselves here and there on the black, ill-smelling planks of the rotting dock.

An unkempt set they were—"those wild Graham youngsters of Minnow Island," as the people of the mainland contemptuously or commiseratingly called

them. There were the twins, Grant and Meade, so named by their patriotic sire—two black-eyed, gypsyish-looking little lads of four years, whose clothing suggested a wardrobe of astonishing elasticity, for part of the time they wore jackets and trousers, as became their sex, and the rest of the time petticoats and pinafores; for Patty, whom circumstances compelled to be very economical, said, "They've got to use up their baby dresses, and must wear them until Tom has outgrown his things."

Tom was the next older child, a grave, quiet little lad, with dark, serious eyes and a face toward which many a tourist turned—it possessed so wondrous a beauty of feature, coloring and expression. Little Tom was a music-loving soul. An old Frenchman up at Gananoque had given him a violin—a cheap, shackly affair, but tucked under Tom's soft little chin, and touched by his tanned fingers, it awoke such melodious strains that many a boatman on the St. Lawrence let his oars rest and paused to listen to the sweet sounds floating out from Minnow Island.

After Tom came Dick and Joe, sturdy, commonplace lads; and then Loretta, generally called "Retta," whose pretty peachbloom face neither blaze of sun nor glare of water seemed to tan or make coarse. Retta was slender and graceful, with eyes like cornflowers and hair yellow as cornsilk. Retta was dainty and fastidious in all her ways, and sometimes seemed strangely out of place among the rough belongings of Minnow Island.

She was the one who was especially favored in

more than beauty. She was always given the best of everything, whenever there was any best; very often she found fault with even that!

But let us go back to the old black dock where Patty is standing with her brown hand lifted to her forehead, shading her eyes from the glare of the sunset.

Far across the shining waters fluttered stripes of red and white, with a star-dotted square of blue. The tall flagstaff on Valetta Island, which for months had stood up gaunt and bare, now reared proudly the Stars and Stripes. Valetta Island was twin sister to Minnow Island. A channel of water, barely an eighth of a mile in width, separated them. They were alike in shape and size; the same in rocky structure, softened by the same green mosses and grasses, with a growth of oak and pine trees. But the buildings on Minnow Island were the Grahams' weatherbeaten cabin and woodshed, flanked by tarry barrels and washtubs and benches, a tangle of clothes lines, and a heap of black driftwood.

Casa Valetta was pleasant and inviting, with a smooth, well-kept lawn, cool with shadows from well-arranged groups of trees, yet bright and cheery with the sunlight lying in golden streaks across it. Amid the foliage were seen the peaked red roofs and quaint turrets of a handsome edifice that was almost castle-like in shape. There were cosey balconies, wide verandahs on both upper and lower stories, and at the side of the house and along the gray stone terrace by the water's edge were beds of bright blue lobelias, scarlet geraniums and orange



PATTY STOOD SHADING HER EYES.

calendulas, the gay hues of which made a double border from their reflection in the clear waters. A beautiful spot was Casa Valetta, a bit of fairy land created by wealth and good taste.

Thus far this season Casa Valetta had worn its beauties alone—admired only by the occupants of boats passing near it. But now Patty Graham knew from the flag fluttering so proudly in the breeze that the owners of the island were expected. Only the afternoon before her father had said, with an important air, “I got a telegram from Judge Leonard this noon. He and his folks are coming to-morrow. He wants me to be at the dock when the ‘Saint’ comes over from Clayton, and carry him and his luggage over to Valetta.”

“You’ll do it, won’t you, father?” said Patty, with a bright face. “The Judge always pays so well! It isn’t often that you get such a good job.”

“Nor so hard a one!” drawled Ben Graham. “Those big Saratogas Madam Leonard has need a giant to lift ’em on board. Then there are band-boxes and bundles and canary birds and poodles and Angora cats and umbrellas—oh, my! ’most every time I get started I have to row back for something that’s been forgotten. But the Judge pays well for the business, that’s a fact, and—well, maybe if I get back from fishing over in Eel Bay I’ll go down when the ‘Saint’ comes in and lend a hand with the Judge’s things. I don’t see”—in a grumbling, half-jealous tone—“I don’t see what he has so many for! So much money, too! And only him and his wife to spend it. I believe I did hear that

he and she adopted a relation—a niece—or somebody that they were going to bring here, but I guess it ain't so. At any rate they've got two or three houses scattered here and there, all of 'em as fine as palaces, to say nothing of pretty Casa Valetta. Yes, all the money they want; and here am I, as poor as Job's turkey, with eight mouths to feed and precious little to do it with!"

"You wouldn't spare any of us, would you, pa?" little Tom asked, his dark eyes steady with a childish gravity.

"No," replied Mr. Graham, with an emphatic jerk of his long, lank body—"no, of course not, sonny. You are a pretty fair set of youngsters, and I'm proud of you. Only I wish your ma had lived to help take care of you. As it is, it keeps me flying around all the blessed while!"

Perhaps it was in consideration of this necessity for exerting himself that Ben Graham concluded to forego the pleasure of a prolonged day's fishing in Eel Bay, and instead, as the afternoon waned, to station himself and his boat near the dock at "The Park." And when the whistle of the "St. Lawrence" sounded over the waters and Patty and her brood ran down to the shore of Minnow Island, they saw presently the dingy white skiff coming across the river, its prow turned toward Valetta Island.

It was heavily laden. Patty could see the Judge's pink, bald head as he removed his hat to catch the first flutter of the evening breeze through Roscabel Narrows. She could see the bunch of purple velvet

pansies of the dainty bonnet perched upon Mrs. Leonard's white curls; she heard the nervous little screech of the French maid as the swells of the outgoing steamer rocked the skiff.

The twins, Grant and Meade, watched with mingled glee and anxiety the insane efforts of a shaggy white poodle to jump after his own silly reflection in the water. The Grahams were quite familiar with all these performances. Every year, with one exception, the Leonards had spent the summer at Casa Valetta. Their coming was the event of the season. When one has a neighbor only a couple of months during the year, one is likely to be interested in that neighbor.

Tom used to lie awake nights listening to Mrs. Leonard playing old-fashioned tunes on her grand piano; Retta longed for the dainty embroidered gowns hanging upon the Leonards' clothes-line; Dick and Joe were eager for the dimes and quarters the Judge gave them when they drew the net for the minnows he used for bait. As for Grant and Meade, those inquisitive youngsters kept track of everything that was going on at Casa Valetta, and were especially interested in the big ice-cream freezer, which the turbaned black cook was sometimes seen solemnly turning on the back porch. Many were the conjectures as to whether the contents were flavored with lemon or vanilla, strawberry or chocolate.

"That's the fifth time that the little fellow has tried to jump into the water," said Grant to Meade, referring to the fluffy poodle's efforts. "If I was in

that French woman's place I'd let him go! He wouldn't want to try it again! Say, Patty, that poodle would make a splendid mop, wouldn't he?"

But Patty did not reply; she was staring hard at a new occupant of the boat. It was some one she had never seen before. In the stern sat a slender figure clad in a navy-blue suit, with a jaunty sailor-hat perched upon curls of red gold. The slanting rays of the sun sent a pink flush over a pale, sweet face, bringing out strong, noble lines, marking honor, truth and culture.

Patty Graham drew a long breath and pressed her lips together in a thin scarlet line. Instinctively there came to her a recognition of the difference between herself and this young girl.

She looked down at her faded calico dress and bare feet; it had been too warm that day to wear shoes, especially while at her task of ironing. Now she wished that she had worn them, for the frolicsome breeze hurrying down from the Narrows fluttered her skirts, revealing ankles tanned and sun-burnt. The same wind blew her hair into a rough, unkempt mass.

However, she was not more disreputable looking than the rest of the family, if that was any consolation. Never had the twins looked more ragged and dirty; the patch on Joe's trousers had ripped loose and flapped in the breeze like a diminutive casement window; Dick's face was gory with berry stains, and there was only one lonely agate button on Tom's blue shirt.

The only presentable garment was Retta's dress—

a new pink calico with ruffled skirt. Patty had scolded because Retta put it on that morning, but now her soul rejoiced because of this bit of respectability.

"I guess that girl sitting there in the stern is the Judge's niece," said Retta, with an important air. "I heard Mrs. Mahoney say so; she has been over at Casa Valetta mopping and cleaning and sweeping down eel-flies. She said that she had to clean the little tower-room especially well, because the Judge wrote that Miss Doris was coming. She's just like a daughter to them. They adopted her years ago. The reason she hasn't been here summers is because she spent her vacation with her own parents. The rest of the year she's been away at a fashionable boarding-school. Oh, my! I just wish some rich folks 'd adopt me and dress me up nice." And Retta smoothed down the freshly-ironed folds of her pretty pink gown, sighing dolefully as she did so because the material was not the rich silk of her fertile imagination.

"She seems like a nice girl," said Patty. "I kind of like her face—don't you, Ret? Not stuck-up looking. She isn't much older than I am."

"But lots more style about her!" said Retta, with an aggravating laugh. "I must say you do look like a witch, Patty!"

"You oughtn't to say that, Retta!" Tom exclaimed, spiritedly. "You're the one who always has the good clothes, if there are any good clothes to be had. Patty has to have the rag-tag and bob-tail of everything. That pink calico you've got on

now, Retta, was some pa brought home for Patty, and *you* took it!"

Whereupon Retta promptly slapped him, and a prolonged wail resounded far over the waters of the St. Lawrence.

Patty's tanned cheeks took on a deeper tinge of red, and her eyes flashed.

"For shame, Ret! to have a fuss now, right in sight and hearing of the Judge's folks! They'll think we're perfect savages; and I suppose we are," she added, in a low, sullen tone.

With a flirt of her pink skirts, Retta replied, "Well, I shan't take sauce from anybody! Somehow Tom and the rest of 'em are always sticking up for you—"

"'Cause we like Patty better!" the twins interrupted, in a sturdy duet, and Tom paused in his weeping long enough to say emphatically, "That's so!"

Patty bestowed an appreciative pat upon the tousled heads nearest her and then turned to watch the occupants of the boat.

The swift current bore the latter near the upper point of Minnow Island, and it was with considerable difficulty that Ben Graham kept the bow pointed toward the little inlet at the head of which stood the Judge's fine boat-house, fresh with olive and red paint, and looking like a Chinese pagoda.

The breeze had increased; the water was becoming choppy and the waves wore white caps. The Judge's two hundred pounds were no inconsiderable weight in the boat, and with the three women

and the oarsman, bore it down close to the water's edge.

The poodle's antics kept the Frenchwoman busy, and her nervous movements rocked the heavily-laden skiff.

"Sit still, if there's any sit to you!" growled Ben Graham, with a frown that included both poodle and maid. But all unheeding, the former gave another spring forward—his little black nose nearly touched the dancing spray. Mademoiselle Celeste made a grab for him, uttering shrilly,

*"Helas! malheureusement!"*

The boat tipped suddenly, and over went—not the irrepressible poodle, but instead a heap of navy-blue flannel. Pretty, delicate Doris Leonard sank beneath the waves!

Confusion reigned; the Judge forgot his dignity and shouted lustily for help; his wife fainted away; Celeste made sky and water ring with mingled English and French exclamations; the poodle barked wildly as if in intense enjoyment of the whole affair.

As for Ben Graham, lazy and shiftless though he might be, he was no coward. He placed the oars on the outriggers, jerked off his heavy boots, and was just drawing off his coat preparatory to jumping in after the unfortunate girl, when—

*"Regardez! voila!"* shrieked the maid, and there was a sudden splash in the water by Minnow Island, the glimpse of bare, tanned limbs, a faded blue skirt, and a mass of tangled hair pushed back from a flushed and earnest face.

Patty Graham had leaped into the water!

## CHAPTER II.

FROM the time that Patty Graham could toddle alone she had taken to the water like a duck. At three years old she had waded into the shallow places among the little inlets of Minnow Island, and, holding her worn gingham skirts above her dimpled knees, had thrust out pink toes over the yellow sand and many-colored pebbles at the bottom of the cool, clear water, going farther and farther out each time. At five years she could swim fairly well; at ten she could beat her brother's record, and even her father had to look out for his laurels! She could dive and duck, tread water, swim on her back or either side, and stay under water longer than many an oarsman of the river. In short, the St. Lawrence was for her a grand, big bath-tub, a place in which to have fine frolics.

When Ben Graham saw his daughter plunge into the water to rescue the Judge's niece, his face expressed less concern than paternal pride, and taking the oars again, he plied them with unwonted energy, saying earnestly:

"Sit still, Judge!" and to the maid, "Sit still, Miss *Parlez-vous*—you and that fluffy cur have done enough mischief! Don't worry—any of you! Miss

*Parlez-vous*, slap a leetle water on the madam's face—that'll bring her to! My Patty'll save the girl all right, and no harm but the wetting of the clothes of both of 'em!"

By this time Doris had risen to the surface. With one hand Patty seized her bright hair, and with the other made swift, bold strokes toward the boat. A moment of breathless suspense, and then out from the glassy, blue-green waters and foam-flecked eddies Patty held up her dripping burden to the eager outstretched arms of the occupants of the boat.

Mrs. Leonard, just recovering from one fainting fit, nearly went into another when she saw Doris' ghastly face framed in wet hair like melting gold; the French woman gave another shriek, and the Judge, with pallid face, exclaimed, "Oh, she's dead!"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Patty, as with one wet, pink hand resting upon the edge of the boat she paused to get breath after her exertions, "she's not dead—she didn't go down but once. But she needs to have her wet clothing taken off and be wrapped in warm blankets."

"Got any fire at home, Patty?" Ben Graham inquired.

"Yes, sir. Been ironing and baking beans; the stove was piping hot a few minutes ago."

"We're nearer our island than yours, sir," said Ben Graham, addressing the Judge. "Your niece is all right—not a doubt of that—but she looks kind of delicate, and perhaps we'd better get her dry and warm as soon's we can; so s'pose we take her to our



“OH, NO, SIR!” GASPED PATTY, “SHE’S NOT DEAD.”

place? We're poor folks, as you know, sir, and our belongings are no great shakes, but you're welcome to all we've got on Minnow Island."

"Thank you—thank you, Graham," said the Judge, huskily. "I will remember your kindness. As you say, I think we had better give my niece speedy attention. A minute more or less may be the turning-point for her, poor girl! And she's gone through so much the past year! It seems dreadful that she should have this happen to her just now, when she was beginning to show something like recovery."

"There doesn't seem to be a bit of life in her!" moaned Mrs. Leonard, as she rubbed the white hands.

"Oh, yes, there is; cheer up, ma'am; cheer up!" exclaimed Ben Graham, and he fell to rowing lustily, as Patty, relinquishing her hold on the boat, swam away with vigorous strokes for the shore. While the boat was yet many lengths away, she was climbing upon the dock at Minnow Island.

Her face was flushed with excitement, caused not so much by the past occurrence as by the expected event.

"To think of Judge Leonard's folks coming to our house!" she exclaimed, as, with a hasty gesture, she shook the water from her dripping garments and ran up the rocky path leading to the house.

Her feelings were divided by a glow of generous hospitality inherent to her nature and a blush of shame at the poverty and disorder of her home. Never before had things seemed so shabby!

The fire was still burning briskly in the kitchen stove; one of the covers was red hot. The tea-kettle, filled with water for washing the long-neglected dinner dishes, was puffing out coils of white steam from its dingy spout.

Patty rushed into the down-stairs bedroom; it was the one spare room, and the bed with its belongings was clean, though old-fashioned. She gave a sigh of relief that things looked better than she had expected. Then she hurried to her own chamber, slipped off her wet skirt and waist, and hastily twisted up her dripping hair.

"Retta," she exclaimed to her sister, who had followed her about, firing a volley of questions, "Retta, do hurry and help me to get things to rights! The Judge and his folks 'll be here in a minute or two, and that—that poor girl—"

"Why don't they take her to their own island?" Retta interrupted, crossly. "It wouldn't have taken five minutes more. I don't like the idea of those stuck up folks coming here and sneering at everything we've got!" and Retta deposited herself in the rocking-chair and began to rock vigorously, scowling meanwhile at everything in the room, excepting her own pretty reflection, as seen in Patty's little looking-glass with its dingy gilt frame.

Patty's wrath waxed hot.

"Retta Graham! aren't you ashamed of yourself! When folks are almost drowned, it's no time to think about style! Folks have got to do things quickly. You know when little Toby Denner fell

off the sailboat, that they said if they could have gotten him warm sooner he might have lived—the shock and chill killed him more than the water. Minnow Island is nearer than Casa Valetta, and we've got fire and hot water and a clean, warm bed. Of course, there's no style or grand things—but we can't help that—and the Judge and his wife are too scared to notice much. Yet you know I want things decent; so do stop that everlasting rocking, Ret, and try to do something! Take those clothes into pa's bedroom, can't you?"

Still scowling, Retta took the clothes-horse filled with freshly-ironed garments which Patty had placed in the spare room, and set it with a bang in the adjoining apartment. Then she took her Sunday hat, which for the entire week had dangled from a chair-back, smoothed its tumbled feathers, and laid it on the closet shelf; the twin's new and shining rubbers were taken from the window-ledge, also a bottle of shoe-blackening and a vase filled with faded daisies and clover tufts.

Patty meanwhile had hurried to the door to meet the procession filing up the path.

First came the Judge carrying his niece, her head and neck drooping over his shoulder, making one think of a broken lily. The water dripped from her yellow hair and the hem of her blue gown. Next came Ben Graham clumsily but carefully assisting Mrs. Leonard; after them the maid and the poodle, both, for a wonder, silent and dejected.

The twins, Grant and Meade, round-eyed and visibly impressed by the importance of the occasion,

brought up the rear, the rest of the boys having remained to tie the boat.

Patty gave one brief, hesitating glance, then threw open the door. Her cheeks were flushed, her fingers trembled as they clutched the door-knob. Never before had she been called upon to play the part of hostess on so important an occasion. She felt unequal to the task and turned a half-appealing glance toward her sister—Retta of the respectable frock.

Patty's qualms were unnecessary. The Judge and his wife were too filled with concern for their niece to notice the poverty of the little house. It was only the maid, who, holding her head very high and drawing the draperies of her trim little body around her, whispered to the poodle, "*Bijou, mon petit!* what a wretched abode to which to carry the body of Mademoiselle Doris! *Eh, bien!* It matters little to her, *pauvre ange*—she is dead, doubtless!"

But Doris was not dead; she had been in water so short a time that with the speedy assistance given her it was not long before she opened her eyes and stirred uneasily in the warm blankets wrapping her like the folds of a cocoon. The first thing her bewildered eyes rested on was a motto hung on the wall at the foot of the bed. It was one that Patty had found over at the Park, thrown out in a heap of rubbish in the backyard of a cottage, the verandas of which her father had been hired to paint, for he was a jack-of-all-trades. The motto was on perforated board, worked in red and green worsted, and the words, "GOD IS LOVE."

For an instant Doris fancied herself back at a memorable scene in her own life. It was in a church, and she and her young companions were arranging Christmas garlands around a similar text. She had fallen from the tall step-ladder, been seriously injured, and from that time to this pain and sadness had been her portion. But now, as consciousness came more fully and her gaze wandered to objects around her, she realized that she was in an unfamiliar place. Then, as her eyes rested upon Patty, who, with toil-worn fingers, stood nervously twisting the hem of her gingham apron, her face grave with apprehension, Doris spoke in a weak, quavering voice:

“Why, that’s the girl I saw on the island just as we were coming to Casa Valetta!” and immediately, as if revealed by a flash of light, the memory of the recent accident came to her! She felt anew the horrible sensation of pitching headlong into the water—the cold embrace of the waves; the going down—down—*down* into the crystal-clear, blue-green depths among the tall, fern-like eel grass.

She uttered a little cry and all gathered around her, their faces glowing with gladness and their voices thrilling with thanksgiving that she was still alive.

A half-hour later she was strong enough to be carried, wrapped in blankets, down to the shore, into the boat and over to Casa Valetta, whose many windows flashed out a welcome—red-gold in the last rays of the sun.

But before she left the little cottage she said to

Patty, who brought her a drink of hot milk in the only china cup belonging to the Grahams.

"I want to say something to you, you dear girl! Only I am too weak now to talk much; but I must thank you for what you did—you risked your life to save mine—and I a stranger to you!"

"That was nothing," said Patty, heartily. "I take a swim almost every day in summer, and don't mind a plunge in the river; and, anyhow, pa would have jumped in and saved you if I hadn't."

"And it was God who sent me help in time of need," rejoined Doris, soberly. "I feel very thankful to him, too. You see, I have been sick the past year; I have suffered so much, and, well"—lowering her voice to a little confidential tone—"there have been times when I really thought I wanted to die! But when death threatened me so suddenly to-day I realized how wicked and rebellious I had been. Oh, I thought of lots of things when I was down under the water! I feel now that my life has been given back to me, and I want to make something of it. I have—but there, I mustn't keep uncle waiting. Give me the milk, please, and I'll drink it. How nice it tastes! You're very kind. There, they're coming to carry me down to the boat. Kiss me—Patty, didn't you say your name was—and we'll be real good friends ever after this. Good-by!"

Patty stood a long time down on the shore, watching the boat on its course across the ruby-tinted waters. She stayed there until Retta called out crossly from the doorway of the cottage!

"Patty! for goodness' sake! *are* we going to have any supper to-night? The boys are mussing up the pantry shelf, cutting bread and butter for themselves!"

Patty turned and ran up the path. Her face glowed with something besides the sunset.

"I've got a friend—a real girl-friend—now!" she whispered to herself, and then she smiled as she remembered Doris's arms around her neck and the loving kiss given her.

## CHAPTER III.

THE interval between the winter's day when the accident resulting in Doris Leonard's invalidism had occurred, and the beautiful June day when she came to Casa Valetta, had been marked by successive stages in the girl's thoughts and feelings. At first, indifference to all outward things, because of physical pain and weakness; then a torturing anxiety for the future, and presently a dull apathy, which, more than anything else, retarded her recovery.

The beginning of her Christian career had been so joyous! Filled with youthful enthusiasm, she had been glad to throw time, money, and happy zeal into every good cause claiming her attention. Like many other young converts, she was desirous of doing great things for the cause of Christ, and quite forgetting that, after all, it is the little things which build up the kingdom of God in both church and character.

But now she was being tried in the furnace of affliction, and well was it that at last in her weakness she turned for help to Him who has promised to sustain and comfort his own. She read her Bible much, and once, looking up with her face full of gladness, she exclaimed to Mrs. Leonard,

"Why, auntie, the whole Bible seems to be writ-

ten for folks who are sick in mind or body! I always looked upon it as a sort of guide-book—something to teach us the way wherein to walk; but truly ‘its leaves are for the healing of the nations!’ ”

Mrs. Leonard leaned over and kissed the bright face. She and her husband had learned much during Doris’s illness. Social standing, worldly culture, money, and the pride of birth and breeding stand for little in the face of sickness, pain and death!

The dread of losing the young girl who was so much to them, the seeing how patiently she bore her trouble, her humble efforts to lean upon a Higher Power, and her sincere humiliation when, in moments of weakness, she rebelled at her lot—all these things were teaching the Judge and his wife that true religion is more than a mere name.

Perhaps Doris’s first active interest in things external was aroused on the June day she came so near drowning. As was natural, her thoughts dwelt upon the one who, through God’s mercy, was the means of rescuing her—Patty Graham. And, as we have seen, the magnetism of her warm, winsome nature had drawn Patty to her.

But the latter had the shyness born of pride. Several days passed ere she could muster up enough courage to accept any of the urgent invitations for her to visit Casa Valetta. She felt ashamed of herself and her clothes. She was too proud to show by contrast her inferiority in dress, speech and manners.

Retta, with a confidence born of the consciousness of a new dimity frock, a pair of tan shoes, to say

nothing of a new hat gay with the biggest red roses that the milliner's shop in Clayton could furnish—all of which articles had been purchased by the generous sum paid Ben Graham for rowing the Judge and his household on that eventful afternoon—had called at Casa Valetta twice. And she was enabled to describe, to the minutest detail, the furnishing of the house.

"Of course, it's only their summer home, and I suppose that in the city they have things much grander. But my! it's grand enough! There isn't a cottage at the Park as nice as theirs. The floors are hard wood, and shine, and if you ain't careful you'll slip on them! And there are soft rugs here and there—some green and mossy, and others a queer but pretty color—sort of a brownish pink—'terror got to,' Mrs. Leonard called it."

"I guess you mean 'terra-cotta,' " Patty giggled.

"Well, I don't care what it was—it was pretty! And you ought to see Miss Doris's room! It's in the tower part and it's eight-sided. It is painted white and gold, and from three of the windows you can see up and down the river. Her wallpaper is pale blue and her rugs are white fur—seems like stepping on a pussy-cat to walk on 'em. Her bedstead is brass—shines like gold—and it's got a thing hanging over it—'a canopy,' Miss Doris called it—lace, with blue satin under it. She's got an eiderdown quilt, blue silk with little pink rosebuds scattered over it. She's got willow chairs all trimmed with ribbon bows, and a big couch just packed with pillows all of pale blue and

pink satin, and soft cool linen ones embroidered with ferns and lilies. And do you know, her dresser is almost like a tea-table, there are so many silver and cut-glass toilet articles on it.

"She's got a dear little bird—a canary trained in Germany—and an Angora cat, and the poodle that capered so in the boat that day. As for books—my! there are lots of them! You'd like those, wouldn't you, Pat?—and the pictures, too. I don't care about those, but I did want to peep into her wardrobe to see her dresses; but the door was shut. She had on the loveliest wrapper—a little pink stripe in it, and a jacket of white with soft furry stuff around the neck and wrists. And Miss Doris was just as sweet as she could be. Mrs. Leonard was kind, too, and she made the waitress bring some cake and ice-cream—two kinds, chocolate and vanilla—shaped in little cones. I was ashamed to see the way Joe and Dick gobbled theirs! They just cleared the plate of cake, too! Otherwise I would have smuggled you home a piece in my handkerchief," Retta ended, with unwonted consideration. "But," she added, thoughtfully, "perhaps you'll get some to-morrow, for they want you to come over, sure. Miss Doris sent a note on purpose."

The note was so cordially written that Patty determined to accept the invitation contained therein. Accordingly on the following afternoon, when the work was all done up, and Retta and the boys, under the guardianship of their father, had taken passage on the "New Island Wanderer" for a trip down

Alexandria Bay, with the expectation of an unlimited supply of peanuts and popcorn during the voyage—all of which, trip and refreshments, were to be paid for from the rapidly decreasing balance of the Judge's money aforementioned—Patty, with her face washed as clean as a dew-drenched rose, started out to pay this important visit.

Of course she wore her best—such as it was. Her plump little body was encased in her old white gown, freshly starched and ironed, and crisp to its very ruffles; there was a little blue girdle around her waist, and on her head was her old brown straw hat, freshened up by a bunch of new daisies. She went through the needless ceremony of shutting the window-blinds and locking the door, then, getting into her little skiff, rowed rapidly away.

It was a June day. If Patty had ever read Lowell, doubtless she would have quoted to herself,

“And what is so rare as a day in June!  
Then, if ever, come perfect days.”

But Patty had never even heard of Lowell. However, there was poetry in her soul, heaven-given, and she felt impressed by the beauty around her.

The sun shone down warm and bright, the air was filled with its golden light, and the water sparkled with a million reflections. The great river leaped and ran—itself a page of history, did one but think of it!—a page upon which one might read the events of the past. The eyes of the mind could see the primitive canoes of the redskins paddled over the glittering sheet; then came the *bateaux* of

the Jesuit fathers impelled by a mighty purpose behind them—the purpose of carrying the Cross of Christ into the wilderness, even though that purpose entailed torture and death.

The gay song of some half-breed *voyageur* echoed across the tossing waves or rang out from some green isle—French *chansons*, maybe, as the black-eyed soldiers of doughty *Count de Frontenac* swept with swift oars down the river. After them came the fair-faced Saxons, the conquerors of Quebec, above whose ramparts now waved the royal banner of England. Indians, missionaries, hunters, trappers, soldiers and pioneers—the St. Lawrence had been the watery highway for them all.

But Patty knew little about these things. She knew no more of history than of poetry—thereby being spared much pain as well as pleasure.

What she was thinking about now was not the past pictures of the St. Lawrence, the green waters of which the bow of her little skiff was smiting amid a shower of jewelled spray—for the day, though bright, was breezy, and the water was rough—but the fact that she was going to make a ceremonial call, the first of her experience.

As the distance lessened between her boat and the gray stone coping of Valetta Island, bordered by its gay *parterres* of flowers, she grew more shy, and felt half-impelled to turn the skiff homeward. But that would be cowardly, and, as we know, Patty was no coward.

“I hope they have no company there,” she said to herself. “They did yesterday—some folks from

Calumet Island. They were ladies who came to call on Mrs. Leonard. Oh dear! I'm a little afraid of Mrs. Leonard herself. She makes me think of Queen Victoria—that is, she looks like the pictures of her! Her gown has a trail and rustles with a soft *swish* when she walks. She's real nice and kind, but—well, I'd rather see Miss Doris alone."

Doris was alone. When Patty fastened the boat at the dock, she glanced up toward the grove of wide-sweeping willows, and there, dangling like a huge red and yellow cocoon between two of the trees, was a hammock, from the edge of which rippled a pink dimity gown and a pair of bronze slippers with dainty rosettes.

The slippers sprang to the moss beneath as Patty slowly approached, and Doris's radiant face appeared, as with outstretched hands and a gay voice she gave her so cordial a welcome that Patty's timidity vanished like ice beneath a genial sun; and scarcely a quarter of an hour had passed, ere she and her young hostess both sat in the hammock swinging lazily to and fro, nibbling luscious marshmallows and chattering as only girls can.

And before she hardly knew it, Patty was telling of her life on the island; of the happy summers, warm and pleasant—only for the hard work and scanty fare! then of the winters, so long and dreary, when the Frost King came down on his steed the North-Wind, and the great river grew gray with ice, and the numerous islands were snow-mounds, small and great, their whiteness broken by

the dark evergreens growing out from rocky crevices.

"It is awfully lonesome then, when night comes, and it seems to come so early on winter days," said Patty. "Perhaps, too, there'll be a snowstorm; the wind howls, and oh! the river has such a different sound from what it has in summer—it seems to fret and chafe its shores. Then, when it freezes up—why, then there is an utter silence—such a silence! It makes one feel doubly lonesome. On Sunday mornings, though, we have the pleasure of hearing the church bells over at Clayton. We can hear them real plainly if the wind is in the right direction."

"Can't you go to church and Sabbath-school?" said Doris, with a bright little glance.

Patty looked down.

"I suppose we could if we really tried," she said slowly. "But we never got into the habit. Pa never spoke about our going. I guess he likes to smoke and sleep on Sunday; he's boating and fishing on other days, and ice-cutting in winter. But I did go to church once," and Patty straightened herself up with an important air. "It was over at the Park—in the big Tabernacle, you know. There was a lady I did some washing for, and she wanted me to help her take care of her two children a couple of days while her maid was sick. I had a nice time. She was real kind. I enjoyed the church-going. There was grand singing, and the preacher was from away off—New York or Philadelphia."

"Do you remember anything he said?" Doris

asked, curious to know whether this one privilege had been attended with any good results.

Patty looked thoughtfully at a bat-wing sailboat far out on the river, a mere white fleck against the blue, sunlit waters. "Yes," she said slowly. "He told a story. It was about a little girl who was sent on some errand, and she was obliged to go through a deep, dark woods, which she dreaded very much. But she dreaded far more a certain place on the other side of the woods where the folks kept a dog—a great ugly creature, ready to growl fiercely and to spring out upon the passers-by. Well, she got through the woods all right and past the dog without his paying any attention to her. She did her errand and started to go home, and, though the dog had not troubled her the first time she passed him, she was sure that he would on her return. Her limbs trembled, and her heart was in her throat. She ran by as fast as she could, and soon came to the edge of the woods. Just then, in the dim moonlight—for it was night, you know—she caught sight of an animal lurking among the trees. She was sure that it was the dog.

"She dropped on her knees, so weak from fear was she, and the animal came creeping toward her. He acted very strange, and suddenly she knew that it was no dog at all, but a panther!

"She covered her face with her hands, shuddering, and just then, with great strong leaps, something dashed by her and boldly sprang on the panther. It was the very dog she had so feared, and now it was he who came to her rescue. Over and over the

animals tumbled, snarling and snapping, barking and biting, but at last the panther lay silent upon the brown leaves, while the brave dog trotted to the girl's side and with kindly eyes looked at her. His body was covered with ugly scratches and bleeding wounds. And she put her arms around his shaggy neck and kissed him, and then he persisted in following her home, her faithful protector. And the preacher went on to say that sometimes the trouble we most dread turns out to be the very best thing for us. He talked about it a great deal. I liked the story, but I don't know that I quite understood just what he meant."

"I think I do," and there was a sweet earnestness in Doris's face. "I can take the lesson home to myself. I've dreaded sickness and pain and the thought of being an invalid. It seemed as though I could not endure it! But I have, and I have also learned to be patient and to trust. I have had time to think of a great many things. I have learned to appreciate my past blessings of health and strength, and have learned to have sympathy for those who are in pain and sad and discouraged."

Patty was silent. She had never heard such talk before, and she hardly knew what to make of it. Then, after a little pause, she said slowly and with downcast head,

"I'm sure I shouldn't like to be sick or be an invalid. I think it must be hard to endure—harder than even the things I have to bother me," with a little bitterness.

"And do you have troubles, dear?" Doris asked

gently, taking Patty's tanned hand in her own frail white fingers.

For an instant Patty hesitated. Who was this stranger that she should meddle in affairs that did not concern her? But one glance into the loving eyes bent upon her, and Patty's heart was opened and her tongue loosened. She told of the hard struggles for bare existence on Minnow Island; of the freezing cold that crept through every crack and cranny of the old, weather-beaten house; of the snow that, beating in through the leaking roof, lay like cards of white wool upon her bed in the little loft; she told of the monotonous diet of salt fish, potatoes and cabbage; of the lack of sufficient fuel and of the scanty bedding. Then how tired she was sometimes, how weary of the everlasting cooking, cleaning and mending! There were the squabbles between the boys, and Retta's selfishness.

Then she told something she had never before broached to anybody. It was her own secret longing to leave the island and go out into the wide world, and, as she herself expressed it, "to learn to be somebody." And as she continued, growing almost eloquent over her stifled ambitions, Doris's face glowed with sympathy and with a new-born impulse.

"And you are so fond of books and pictures, Patty? Oh, I have a plan—the very loveliest plan! Why can't you come over here, let us say three or four times a week, and we will read and draw and study together! I'll help you to the very best of my ability!"



“I HAVE A PLAN—THE LOVELIEST PLAN!”

Patty's eyes grew wide with wonder and joy.

"Do you really mean it, Miss Doris?" Then, almost solemnly, "Why, it seems almost too good to be true—that I am to have a *chance!*"

## CHAPTER IV.

THE very beginning was the clean tablecloth. No, that wasn't the *first* beginning of Patty's attempts toward improving things at Minnow Island. The first thing was her keeping her promise to Doris, and finding the old dusty Bible tucked on the top shelf of the closet and taking it to her room for "five minutes' reading every morning."

To be sure, there were some difficulties in the way of doing this. Dick and Joe were having a pillow fight; the walls of the cottage jarred and shook with their vigorous leaps and tumbles. Then the twins were whispering and giggling under a humpy and very shaky tent made from one of the sheets of their cot; while Retta, who sat half-dressed at the foot of the bed in Patty's own room, frizzed her hair over a lighted lamp, making the air redolent with burnt hair.

In the midst of all this Patty, like an earnest little bee, tried to gather a little honey from the sweetness of the "Sermon on the Mount."

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God," she crooned softly to herself.

Then she paused; the noise in the adjoining room had increased to an uproar, and Joe's voice was heard in pain and wrath.

"Boys!" she called out, admonishingly, "come here, please."

Two heads almost as frowzy as Retta's appeared in the doorway.

"He punched me in the eye!" blubbered Joe.

"I didn't mean to," said Dick, with a grin that belied his words. "Anyhow, he was tryin' to stuff the whole pillow in my mouth!"

"Well, stop quarreling, dearies," said Patty, with such unwonted tenderness that Joe winked with his sound eye, and his brother's grin was in danger of extending to behind his ears.

Patty took them by the hand and drew them close to her.

"I have been thinking," she began softly, "how nice it would be if we read every day a little in this book."

"Is that the 'Joseph book'?" Joe broke in. One memorable day long ago—when he had the measles—Patty had read the story of the Hebrew lad and his brethren.

"Yes, it's the 'Joseph book,' and there are lots of other beautiful stories in it—about Abraham and Jacob and David and Paul. Besides, it's God's Book, and tells us all about him and his Son, the Saviour who died for us."

Patty's voice was filled with sweet gravity as she proceeded, for it suddenly came to her how beautiful the wonderful story of old was, and how neglectful she had been in the past in not telling her little brothers of these things. This was just as much her duty as were the cooking,

scrubbing, darning and mending—aye, as much more as the soul is of more importance than the body.

So she gathered them close to her. The twins crawled out from their white encampment in the cot; Retta, half-petulant, half-amused, blew out the smoky lamp and laid down her curling iron. And in a clear voice Patty read of the coming of Christ as a little Babe; of the Wise Men and the Star, and the wondrous beginning of "joy upon earth, and peace, good-will toward men."

As she read, a strange happiness came into her own soul. As with older followers of the Master, the giving unto others brought rich gifts to herself. The waters leaping up from the fountain fell back sun-brightened and purified into their basin again.

I do not know but what the boys were just as noisy as ever after the reading of the chapter and the little prayer which followed it, as Patty, in broken and hesitating tones, said, "Oh, Lord! help us children to love thee and to be kind to one another, to get over being selfish and cross, and teach us more of thee. We are ignorant and helpless and sometimes like to do naughty things, but do give us strength when we are tempted. And be sure to take us all to heaven when we die. For the dear Christ's sake, Amen!"

The boys ran away to their room to dress, but one by one crept back to kiss Patty shyly. Retta continued her frizzling, but the peevish look had disappeared from her face, and, for a wonder, she shook up all the beds and put the bedding to air

before she came down—which was a duty that had hitherto fallen on Patty.

But I believe we began our chapter with an allusion to the clean tablecloth. Patty put one on that morning.

“It seems nice to begin the day sweet and clean,” she said. “How pleasant the morning sun looks streaming in through the windows; I’m glad I washed them yesterday; they shine like clear, cheery eyes!”

She whipped off the faded red tablecloth that looked like a big geographical map, with coffee stains representing oceans and lakes, lumps of cold potatoes for mountain-ranges, dabs of eggs for islands, and the entire country of—let us say—*grease!*

So the white cloth with crisp creases was put on, and the plates, knives and forks arranged in an orderly way. Patty had had a glimpse of the dining-room at Casa Valetta, and the table there had made a novel sensation. She rubbed the tumblers until they shone as clear as crystal; she hunted up the carving-knife and scoured it—never mind if it was going to be used only on slices of liver! She fried that liver in the very nicest way. Instead of humpy, irregular slices, slapped hastily into a spider and dished up in a half-burnt, half-raw state, she made the slices even, rolled them in flour, and watched them until they were a light, crisp brown. Then there were baked potatoes, corn bread, coffee, and a great dish of luscious berries gathered from the rocky hill in the western part of Minnow Island.

And the fresh air of the St. Lawrence was enough to make anybody enjoy such fare.

Retta, who must be credited with loving all pretty things, ran out, and, scrambling among the undergrowth at the edge of the grove, brought back a huge bouquet of wild roses, carmine-tipped, with pale pink hearts. The very dew on them seemed fragrant.

Ben Graham came up from the little inlet where he had been drawing the seine for minnow-bait to sell to gentlemen fishers at the Park. He gave one glance at the inviting table, another at his fishy-smelling hands and slimy overalls, then, with a prolonged whistle, made a dive into his bedroom, from which he presently emerged with clean flannel shirt and trousers, his face ruddy with much scrubbing and his hair as flat and shining as brush and water could make it.

The twins, awed by the unusual cleanliness and order, desisted from their customary pleasantries of tipping over their mugs of milk, and sat and sipped their milk quietly, holding their bread with their little finger perked out as Retta did—the latter following the example of the French maid at Casa Valetta.

That was the beginning of a new order of things at Minnow Island—the Bible-reading and the cleanliness. And somehow the whole place gradually lost its shiftless look. Patty scolded less and coaxed more—until presently the unsightly pile of driftwood flanking the west end of the house was split up and stowed away in the shed; the chips were raked up from the yard; the steps were

mended and covered with two coats of good paint; the old broken skiff lying against the house was filled with rich earth and Patty, planting therein seeds and slips which Mrs. Leonard gave her, soon had the reward of seeing it, like the Lady of Shalott's boat, all decked with flowers.

Inside the house, too, the change went on. Stimulated by Doris Leonard's suggestions, and sometimes by little gifts so graciously offered that they were graciously received, Patty continued the good work of renovation. The floors were painted, and the boys, proud of the shining yellow surface, grew wary about putting muddy boots on them. Patty, who had no little fame at fishing, caught many a pickerel and shining perch, which her brothers sold for her, faithfully bringing her the money, which she invested in pretty scrim for fresh window-curtains and a new cretonne cover for the old lounge.

Ben Graham joined the renovating force. Instead of spending hour after hour dozing and smoking on the bench outside the house, he bestirred himself and made shelves for books that would have done credit to a cabinet-maker himself. Judge Leonard filled the shelves with entertaining and instructive volumes. That was his special gift to Patty, in whom, as he learned to know her better, he took a great interest.

On the upper tier, which Patty called her "Sunday shelf," was "Thomas à Kempis" and dear old "Pilgrim's Progress," and even the twins were never weary of hearing about the lions, the Palace Beautiful, Mr. Greatheart, and the Celestial City.

Those were happy days for Patty, days of growth and development, days of earnest resolutions, steadfast aims, and joyous hopes for the future.

Work? Of course she worked. There were the daily tasks—the drudgery of hard, unending toil; but it was all lightened and sweetened by high thoughts and loving heartiness. And how much difference the latter makes in the tasks of our life!

Doris, too, while growing stronger in body, was developing in grace and strength of character. Patty had saved her life! She could never forget that; but aside from this obligation, she loved the girl, for the latter's bright, sweet self. She longed to make her happy, to bring to her the gracious gifts which her life lacked; and she forgot her own invalidism in making pleasant plans for this girl-friend.

"I haven't been able to do great things, but God has brought me the acquaintance of this girl that I may have the privilege of helping her, of awakening spiritual longings and aims within her. I can give her things to make her life brighter, as a young girl's should be; and I can help her to make the most of herself. She knows little of school knowledge, of books and their teachings; she has no accomplishments—that is, nothing but what she has taught herself; but she is naturally brighter than any girl I ever saw at Madame Hildebrand's. She would make a fine student. As for art—ah, she *has* a talent, and oh! how glad I am that she showed me those sketches of hers!"

This last was in allusion to a secret which Patty,

after several weeks of ripening friendship, had revealed to Doris—a little portfolio made from a pasteboard box and filled with drawings and water-color paintings—all done in a crude yet strong way, showing an observant eye and a steady hand.

Here was a sketch of Casa Valetta standing out amid its mass of greenery; here were the Narrows, the rocky walls on each side, the strip of dark-green, foam-flecked waters between. There was a drawing of the jack-straw lighthouse over near Gananoque, and here a bright bit of coloring—Grindstone Island lying like a yellow couchant lion, its sides dotted with the white tents of the “American Canoe Association,” and the rippling red banner down at “Squaw Point.” Here was the little inlet at the head of Blind Bay, where water lilies, white and sweet, rested on their dark-green pads; there was a clump of cat-tails, velvety-brown, with yellow and purple-mottled butterflies poised above them. Here, a strip of the shore, the white waves curling up over the reddish-brown pebbles, with the twins, plump, pink-legged, catching minnows. There, a charcoal sketch of Tom, looking like a veritable dark-eyed Italian, with his violin carefully tucked under his chin and the far-away, dreamy look on his face. Indeed, Patty’s sketches embraced the whole family taken in various attitudes and attire.

Some of these sketches Doris took the unasked-for liberty of showing to her uncle and aunt, and great were their surprise and interest. And the Judge immediately ordered a well-filled paint-box

which made the little artist's eyes glow with joy when her birthday morning came.

Patty, indeed, felt her life expanding. Now that the future held a promise for her, the present was happier. She sang at her mopping and scrubbing; she sang when her pink arms were plunged deep in the suds of the weekly washing; she sang—how could she help singing?—when she looked from the window of the house—the window framing such a wondrous picture of sky, water and soft green isles! She was more gentle and considerate toward her father, more loving to her brothers, more patient with Retta's foibles. Doris Leonard's influence was like a sweet, stimulating atmosphere.

"You see," Doris said one afternoon, "God wants us to make the very best of each day. He gives them to us, one at a time, and He wants us to put into each one as it comes to us all the joy we can, all the love and patience and good-will; and a day so spent, no matter how hard the work or pain or outside disappointment, will be a happy day!"

"I am trying to have such days," said Patty, earnestly. "You have helped me to feel that God is my dear, loving Heavenly Father, and that he really cares whether I do right or wrong. It is such a comfort to know that *somebody* cares! Oh yes, I am having happy days now, dear Doris; but do you know" — a gloomy look banishing the brightness of her face — "do you know that it is nearly the last of August? Ten days more and you will be

gone. I heard Judge Leonard tell father that Casa Valetta would be closed the first week in September. Oh, dear! what shall I do without you!" and Patty stopped rowing—for the girls were in the little skiff



"OH, DEAR! WHAT SHALL I DO WITHOUT YOU!"

out upon the river—and let the boat drift along as the waves chose to carry it, while she gazed disconsolately into Doris's face.

The latter leaned over and patted the brown hands resting on the oarlocks.

"I know it," she said tenderly; "I've been thinking about it myself! The summer has flown away as if on wings! It has been a happy one to me; and do you know, I dreaded it so! But it has brought me renewed health and strength; I am really beginning to feel almost as well as I did before my accident. And you have given me so much pleasure, Patty."

"I?" said Patty, looking up in surprise. "It is you who have been a comfort to me."

"Oh, but think of the rows you have given me in your little boat, and how you have watched over me, keeping me from taking cold or overdoing. Aunt Isabel says you are a born nurse! And how you've trotted around with my books and cushions and medicines. Oh, I owe you lots, Patty Graham."

Patty shook her head deprecatingly.

"What I have done was only pleasure for me," she said, and then, with a little break in her voice, as she took up the oars and with a few vigorous strokes sent the skiff away from the shoals whither it was drifting—"and now to think that it is all over, or nearly! and that maybe I sha'n't see you again, anyway until next summer!

"Oh, I dread the long, cold winter, the being cooped up here in the ice and snow, seeing nothing but the gray river, hearing nothing but the wind! Then, the noisy squabbles at home, the worrying lest father won't have enough work to keep us in food and fuel, and hearing Retta whine because she can't have this or can't have that!

Then there isn't a nook or corner in the house that I can call my very own, where I can go to sketch and paint and be undisturbed. Then," more gravely, "my Christian life—it's just begun; it is so weak and feeble. I am afraid that when you go away I shall be so discouraged that I'll give up trying. It'll be a hard matter to row over to church when the wind is raw and the water rough, or when it's frozen up, it's so bitter cold. Father doesn't care about it, and the first thing I know, Sunday'll be kept just the same as any other day!"

"Oh, no!" Doris rejoined, cheerily. "You've got too good a start to fall back! Why, didn't you tell me that the boys, even the twins, were beginning to enjoy the Bible reading? And you said that your father stayed and listened several times. What if the boys are noisy—they love you with all their dear honest hearts. As for Retta, well, I think Retta is improving. The other day when I was at your island she was actually sewing buttons on Grant's shoes. And she's been consulting me in regard to the Christmas present she is making for you."

"Really!" and Patty's face brightened. "Retta is a pretty girl, and I'm proud of her delicate face and dainty ways."

"She is pretty. She's growing fast, too. I shouldn't wonder if she would soon be able to take charge of things if you were away," and Doris nodded, as if in assent to some unspoken thought revolving in her busy brain.

"Yes; the day I went to the Endeavor meeting she kept house; made pies and cookies, and cleaned

up. She's a good cook, Ret is; makes things look fancy and appetizing. But dear me, Doris! there's the 'Islander' bringing in the six o'clock mail! I must hurry home. You will be late for supper!"

"For dinner, you mean," Doris corrected, laughing. "Uncle and Auntie still adhere to their city customs. Well, we are late, that's a fact. Let me take the other pair of oars, Patty—isn't it nice that I don't have backache any more!—and we'll 'pull for the shore.' "

Patty let out her passenger at the pretty pagoda boat-house on Valetta Island, and Doris ran up along the gray stone coping with its border of flowers. Once she stopped, just as Patty had rowed away a few rods from the beach and called out gayly,

"Oh, I say, Patty dear!"

"What is it?" and Patty paused, the oars held aloft, the drops falling from them like loops and strands of diamonds.

Doris's eyes shone; her cheeks were red and there was such a funny, mysterious look on her face, that Patty stared in wonder.

"Oh, Patty!" she repeated. "I know—*something*! But I sha'n't tell—at least not just yet!" and with a little tantalizing laugh Doris waved her white hand and disappeared among the shrubbery surrounding the house.

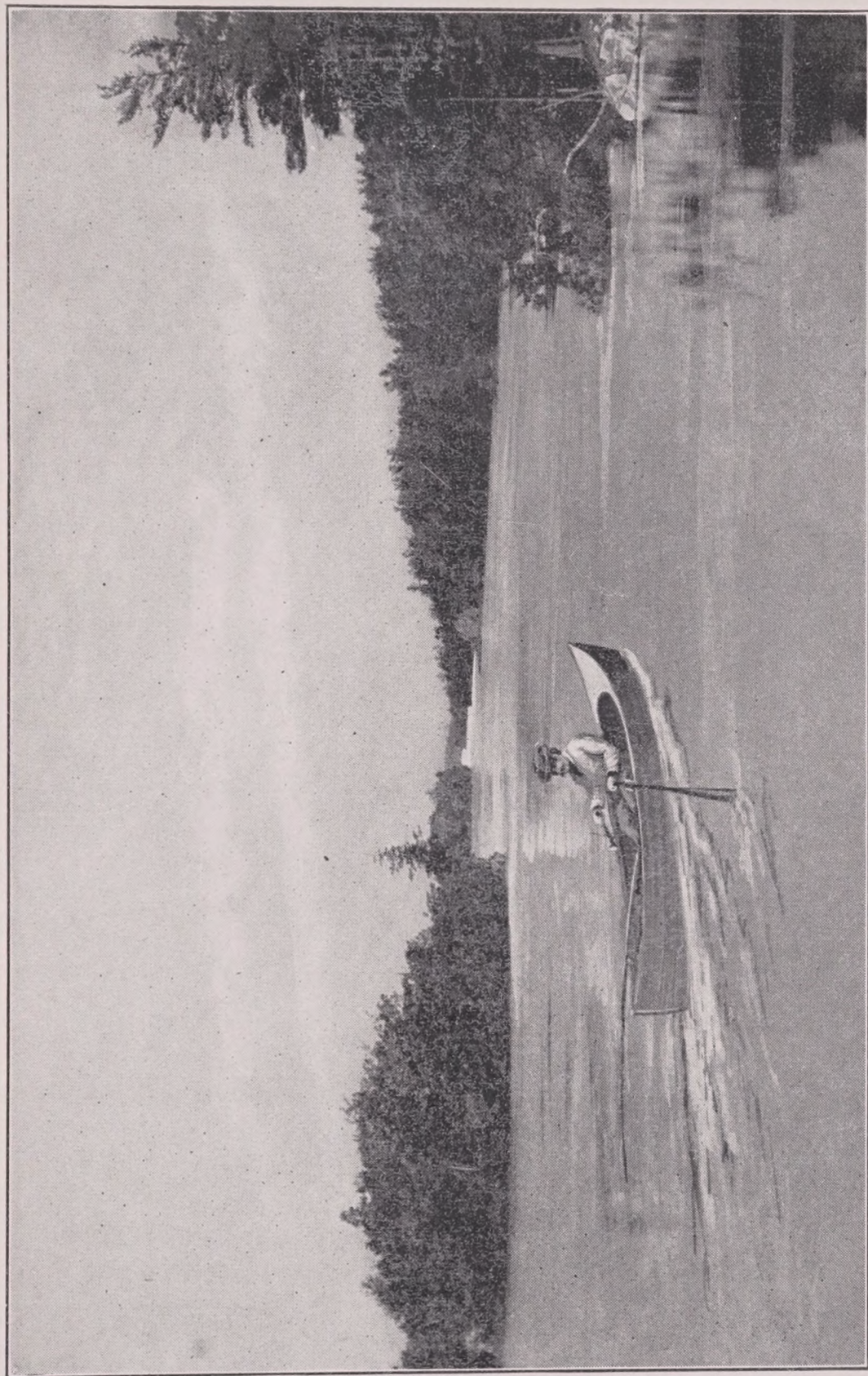
"What can she mean?" said Patty as she rowed homeward, her boat rocking like a wind-tossed leaf from the swells of the out-going "Islander."

## CHAPTER V.

A soft southwest wind was churning up the waters of Little Crescent Bay. It was a good "fishing wind," and when, in the gray of the fast-falling twilight, Ben Graham drew up his boat on the dock and slid it into the little weather-beaten shed he called his boat-house, he took from it a long string of orange-finned perch and several black-spotted pickerel—one a good "nine-pounder."

But Ben Graham was not as loudly jubilant as usual over his good luck. Instead of a vigorous and good-natured shout for Dick and Joe to assist him, he laid the string of fish down on the dock, sprawled beside them, tailor-fashion, and taking out his fish-knife sharpened it a little, using his boot as a whetstone, and then began to clean his fish with a dexterity born of much practice.

The pickerel were promptly decapitated and scaled; as for the perch—one slit down the back, another down the front edge, the knife slid under, then a little pull with the finger, and the whole skin, scales and all, peeled off as one prepares a banana for eating—and the flesh of the fish was left bare and white, ready to be rolled in meal and fried in sizzling hot pork-fat.



“ IN THE GRAY OF THE TWILIGHT BEN DREW UP TO THE DOCK.”

Ben Graham performed his task in gloomy abstraction. He neither whistled nor sang, as he was accustomed to do while engaged in the disagreeable task of fish-cleaning.

Now and then he gazed far away where the gray of the waters and the gray of the sky were divided by a twinkling glow of yellow light from the lighthouse on Shoal Island. A gloom of gathering night and storm seemed to brood over him.

Once he paused, and, reaching in his coat-pocket, took hold of the corner of an envelope concealed there; then he thrust it back.

"No, it's getting too dark; I ain't got time, and my hands are too fishy to read it now. Besides," with a deprecatory cough, "I know what's in it; I've read it three times a'ready! Each time it makes a feller feel worse!"

A little pause, and then he tossed the head of a pickerel with glazed eyes and gaping mouth, out upon the dark, frothing waters.

"She's a good girl, Patty is," he soliloquized. "I don't know what I'd do without her. She was only 'leven years old when her ma died. The twins were nothing but babies, and such mischievous ones you never did see; always getting into something—pancake-batter, coal-scuttles, cooky-jars, and even the St. Lawrence itself—almost! They were a care and no mistake, and Patty's been through it all and stood by me like a brave little woman. Guess I've expected too much of her sometimes. Got kind of used to it; she's so dependable! But she hasn't had much comfort herself, poor thing!—no pleasures nor

young folks' company. I never just conjectured how much she'd enjoy it until this summer, when she's been with the Judge's niece so much. Such a change as it has been to her! She don't look so tired and discouraged, nor fretty. It does one good to hear her singing around. I don't know"—here Ben Graham shook his head gravely over the perch whose shining jacket he was slipping off—"I don't just exactly know how I'd stand it without hearing my little Pat warbling around."

He sighed heavily and stared up into the sky where the wind was doing its best to sweep away cloud and mist. A star was struggling through like a brightly-lighted ship on a stormy sea. The soft rays shone down pure and calm. They made Ben Graham think of his lost wife's eyes.

"She made me promise to do the best I could for the children—the very best," he said slowly, as he stooped and rinsed off his fish in the fast-flowing water and wrapped them in a newspaper preparatory to going up to the house.

"She wanted them to have a chance. She was always talking about that. 'They're bright children, Ben dear,' says she—and so they are! Patty looks like her ma. She's got her ma's ways, too. Her ma liked pictures; she was always cutting 'em out of newspapers and pasting 'em up around the house. Well, I don't know," with a solemn shake of his head, "I don't know but what I'll have to stand it if she says yes—and it's natural she should say yes."

He washed his hands and dried them on his over-

alls, and with an old stub of a broom from the boat-house swept off the scales and bloody remains of the fish from the planks of the dock. Then he walked slowly up to the house.

The door was wide open and a yellow shaft of light shot out into the moist darkness. With it came appetizing odors of supper.

The children were singing; the twins' shrill treble, Tom's rich notes, and Patty's sweet, girlish voice filled the little room with melodious cheer.

It was Joe who first heard the father's step and ran out.

"Oho! Fish for supper! Hurray! Enough to go around and to spare! Say, Patty, didn't I tell you that you needn't fry that salt pork!"

"Oh, the fat'll be all ready for the fish," said Patty, cheerily, as she smiled a welcome at her father.

Her eyes were shining and her cheeks as red as cherries from bending over the fire.

"There's a letter for you, Patty," said her father, as he disappeared into his bedroom to change his clothes. "I'll put it on the sewing-machine for you."

"Guess it's the samples of dress-goods Miss Doris promised to send for you, isn't it?" Retta remarked, with an inquisitive glance.

"No," said Patty, as she took up the envelope.

The latter had a business-like look; in the upper left-hand corner was printed, "*Office of the Surrogate of Calumet County.*" It was addressed in Judge Leonard's handwriting; Patty knew it very

well from its peculiarity. Doris had once laughingly observed that her Uncle's chirography "looked as though he had done it with his cane."

The letter was addressed to her father and had been opened, but Patty did not stop to read it. She did not have time, for the pork-fat was sending up a blue flame; the fish must be fried and the twins were clamorous from long waiting for their supper. Besides, *something*—she knew not what—made her prefer to delay the reading of the letter until she was alone.

"It's something important," she said to herself. "Pa looks so sober; he must be worried. Maybe—oh, dear! maybe Judge Leonard wants to sell Minnow Island!"

Ben Graham did not own the island on which he lived, but stayed there, rent free. Every now and then came a haunting fear that possibly the family might be sold out of house and home, as Patty said. Only the previous summer a syndicate, desirous of putting up a new hotel, had made overtures to the Judge.

Patty fried the fish, poured out the tea, spread treacle on the twins' slices of bread and butter; then, when all were seated at the table, she ran up to her own room.

Groping around in the dark, she found the little tin match-box and lighted her hand-lamp. Kneeling down, with her elbows resting on the bureau, she read the letter.

It was brief, but to the point. When Judge

Leonard had anything important to say, he said it in as few words as possible.

At first a look of bewilderment swept over Patty's face. Then gradually, as the full import of the letter dawned on her mind, she grew pale, then flushed again, and her eyes grew large with surprise and elation.

"Wants me!" she exclaimed to herself. "Wants *me*? Painting-lessons and travel abroad! 'As companion and sister to Doris!'—'Mrs. Leonard and myself have set our hearts upon it.'" Patty repeated almost solemnly sentence after sentence from the letter.

She sank down upon the floor, as ready to cry as to laugh. Although she could hardly believe it, there it was, in black and white—the offer of the Leonards to take *her*, Patty Graham, into their beautiful home—not as a servant, but as a child almost. They would give her love, kindness, and tender care. She would have books, nice clothes, the best of schooling, as well as instruction in the art she so loved. Then, too, she would be with her friend Doris.

She had only time enough to take in a hasty idea of this bewitching proposal when Joe's voice brought her down from the heights to which her imagination soared.

"Patty! where are you! The sugar bowl is empty and the twinnies want some more bread and 'lasses!"

So, with throbbing heart, she hurried down the stairs.

Her father glanced up as she emerged from the little dark hallway. There was a wistful look on his

face, but he said nothing. However, after the boys were abed that night, and Retta had gone up stairs to try on a dress-waist on which she had been industriously sewing all the evening, Ben Graham said to Patty, who stood by the kitchen table soberly beating the bread-sponge :

"Well, my girl, what do you think of the Judge's letter?"

"I haven't had much time to—to think about it!" was the hesitating reply.

"I call it a pretty nice offer!"

"Yes! isn't it kind of them!" said Patty, enthusiastically, and turned a glowing face towards the slouching figure sitting and smoking in the dimly-lighted corner.

"Very fair, I consider it," Ben Graham continued. "It's a chance out of a thousand! It's a chance that your ma would love to have you get! Your ma was always talking about having the children make something of themselves. She'd been glad to have you become a painter."

"An artist, pa," Patty corrected respectfully.

Ben Graham made a little grimace.

"It's all the same in Dutch! But land! if 'artist' sounds more stylish, as Ret would say, why, 'artist' let it be! Anyhow, I think you would be 'A number one' at the business, if you took lessons from somebody who knew how to paint. Maybe you could make money at it by-and-by. There was a man over at Clayton who told me that he had seen a picture in a store at Watertown—a little bit of a picture it was, of pansies or some such garden-truck—and it was

sold for twenty-five dollars! Just think of that now!"

"Well, maybe I wouldn't amount to anything after all, pa," Patty said, modestly. "Seems as though I get more and more discouraged with my sketches every day."

Ben Graham waved his pipe impatiently.

"Oh, nonsense! don't give up! You'll make a strike by-and-by! It's just like fishing: you've got to have the right kind of tackle, a good wind, the proper depth of water—not too much eel-grass—fix your bait on all right, then have patience to wait!"

"Well, but, father," said Patty, plunging at once into the pivotal part of the question, "you know that I am the oldest of the children, and have got into the way of looking after things. How would you get along without me?"

Ben Graham stirred uneasily in his chair.

"My stars! we'd have to manage somehow! The twins are getting bigger and don't need so much running after. And Retta, why, it's time she took her turn at the wheel. And, anyhow," a little dolefully, "I s'pose I could get Mrs. Mahoney to come over two or three times a week. Her tongue is enough to turn one into a cold clod of the valley, but I'll try to put up with it. She likes gum; I can buy her some 'tutti-frutti' and set her to work chewing it so that she won't talk so much;" and Patty's sire grew somewhat cheerful in contemplating this novel plan.

"How long did the Judge say he wanted me to stay with them?" said Patty thoughtfully.

"Oh, a couple of years anyway, and he kind of

intimated, you know, that he calculated to keep you longer, provided you did well and were happy and contented. Maybe, though, you could learn enough in less than two years to paint a picture worth twenty-five dollars!"

"Wouldn't it be splendid!" and Patty clapped her hands in joyful contemplation of so bright a future. "And how nice to earn one's living by painting pretty things here and there and selling them to people who would have pleasure in looking at them."

"Your going with the Leonards would sort of take you into good company and all that," said her father. "You like folks who are gentle and refined. You like pretty things, too, just as well as Ret. Land knows, I haven't been able to give you what you deserve!" and Ben Graham's rough chin sank down disconsolately on the checked front of his shirt.

Patty flew across the room, put her arms around his neck and kissed him. "You've given me all you could, pa," she said. "And it really seems as though it would be kind of mean if I were to go off and leave you now."

"Sho! don't say that! That's nonsense. You've done your part—more than you should! And now that you've got a fine chance, take it. Take it, *sure!* That's your pa's heartfelt advice," and Ben Graham rose from his chair, knocked the ashes from his pipe and went to his room.

But before he blew out his light he took from the bureau drawer a photograph faded a dull brown. It was the face of a woman youthful, though careworn, with frank, honest eyes like Patty's, and with a

gentle, sensitive mouth that made one think of little Tom's. She wore an old-fashioned gown with ruffles and bias bands on sleeves and waist. Ben Graham looked at it long and earnestly.

"I've done my duty, Sarah," he said to it. "I told our child, I told Patty what I thought was the very best thing for her to do. Me and the children'll get along somehow; and, Sarah, I kind of hope that the Lord'll let *you* sort of watch over us!"

Meanwhile Patty had slipped out of the house, ostensibly with the purpose of taking in a few garments left out on the clothes-line, but really to be alone, that she might, as she said to herself, "have a chance to think." She could not do this if she went up to her room, with Retta there, chattering everlastingly about "puffed sleeves," "blouse front" and "boleros."

Gathering the towels and aprons upon her arm, she ran a few steps down the path and then dropped into the weather-beaten hammock swinging between two ungainly pine-trees.

It did not seem so much like rain now. The wind had changed—whipped around to the west; the air was lighter and cooler, and, though a layer of clouds like snow-banks lay along the horizon, there was a great wide space above of clear blue-black, all gemmed with stars. Over toward the lighthouse the moon was rising, and the whole width of the river lay like a sheet of rippling silver. The islands scattered here and there stood out in dark browns and purples, the trees and bushes outlined on them like etchings which Patty had seen in Mrs. Leonard's

parlor. Somewhere, miles away, there was an excursion boat with a search-light aboard, for every now and then the sky glowed as with an aurora. For one instant a bit of mainland or a little isle was bathed in quivering, emerald light, the water near it a great white blaze—then it disappeared, to return again in some other direction.

Far down the river, toward the "Bay," was an island bordered by colored lanterns—red and yellow, gleaming like strings of rubies and topaz. There was a festive gathering of some sort there, and the stray notes of the band floated softly up on the wings of the wind.

Every fibre in Patty's being thrilled with the beauty of the fairy-like scene. Her soul was ever ready to rejoice over the loveliness in the world. And now an opportunity was before her to behold many other wondrous things—the scenery and cities of the Old World, the libraries and art-galleries, the books, painting and sculpture—all the beautiful things done by human brain and human hand. Then the comforting consciousness of good clothes—the rustle and sheen of silk, the touch of soft, cool linen—food, dainty and strengthening—hands that might be kept white and soft because they had no need to toil—Patty thought of all these things as she sat there alone in the moonlight, and it is only true to say that the prospect was very tempting.

But something came between her and the glowing future. Little Meade's stockings—the pink flesh showing through holes in them! Patty had mended a pair of just such stockings that very afternoon. And

there were more pairs to mend! There always *would* be, as long as Minnow Island's rocks lasted and little Meade, like a chubby chamois, clambered over them. And Grant, too, was no less destructive.

Yes, there were stockings, blouses, jackets and trousers—who would see to them all if she went away? Who would make everybody comfortable? Retta detested mending!

Then the twins were croupy children. Would Retta always remember the goose-grease and ipecac? Oh, there were so many homely little every-day duties to attend to!

"Oh, dear!" sighed Patty. "Last spring, if anybody had given me a chance to leave Minnow Island, I would have just grabbed at it! But now—well, I know that, in order to be what God intends us to be, one must, first of all, push back great, big, crowding *Self!* But, oh, the joy of studying, of drawing and painting, and having beauty and luxury around me!"

Thus, all alone, out there with the night, the brooding sky, the rippling waters, with the searchlight flashing on her every now and then like a mighty eye seeking to penetrate her inmost motives, Patty sat and fought the battle between her own ambitions and the humble needs of those dependent upon her. And prayers and tears mingled with her thoughts.

When, an hour later, she ran up the path and softly entered the house, her face glowed even through its mist of tears, and before she went to bed she slipped a little note under her father's door—a simple little note, hastily written, but every word sweet with the savor of self-sacrifice.

“Dear Pa: Will you please thank the Judge, but tell him that it will be impossible for me to accept his kind offer? I would not feel right or be happy to leave home now. There are the twins’ stockings—and the—the goose-grease—dear me! I hardly know what I am writing! Anyhow, I can’t go with the Leonards—so there! You would miss me, pa—wouldn’t you? And, pa, if you will, don’t urge me to go or talk about it! It would be kind of hard for me to listen! Just act, pa, as though nothing had happened. I’ll feel much better that way. And now good-night, dear pa! Respectfully,

FROM YOUR PATTY.”

## CHAPTER VI.

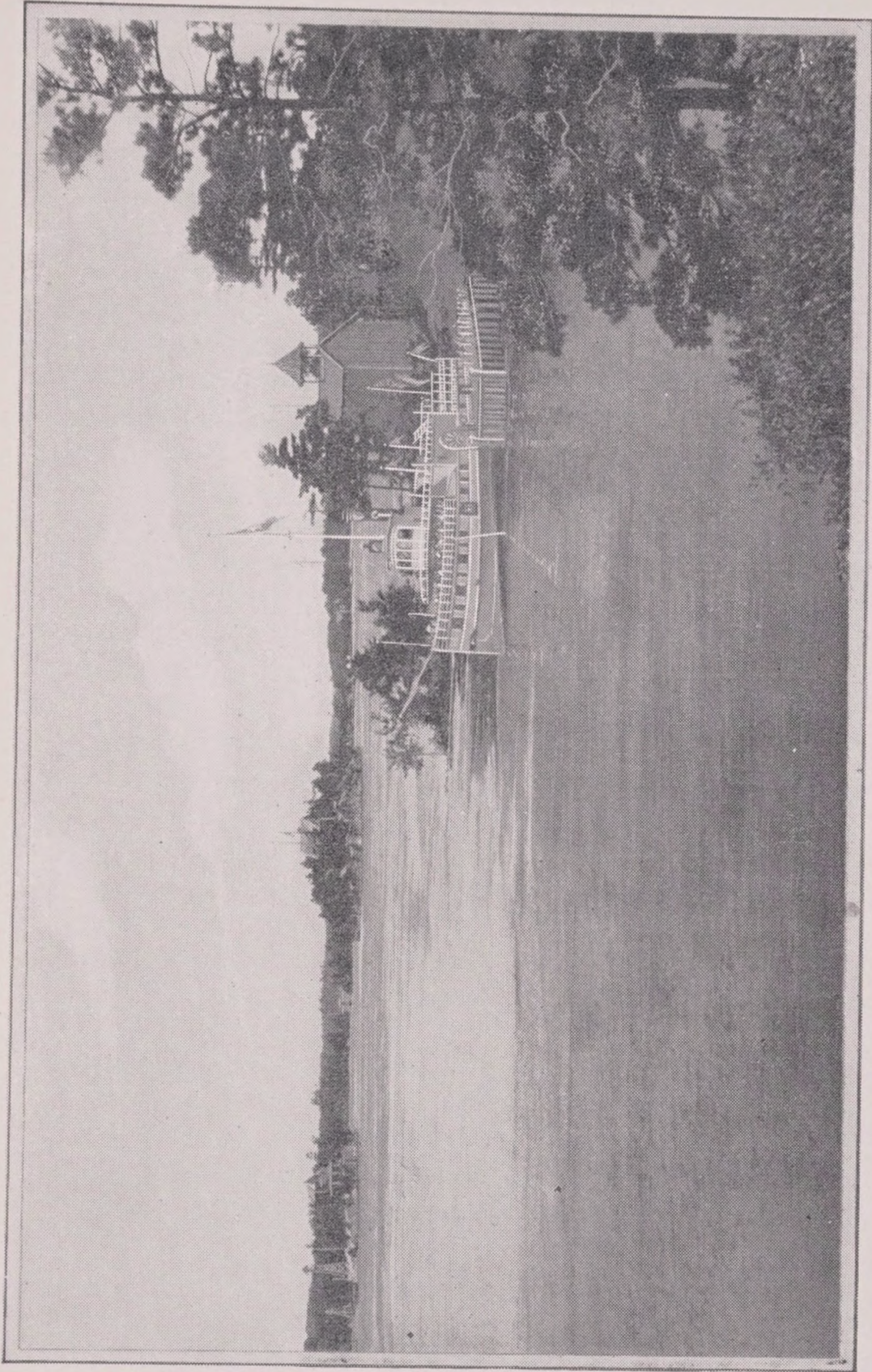
IT was Tom who went with the Leonards. The offer declined by Patty was extended to the music-loving little lad.

"He shall have good care and the best instruction," said the Judge, and, as Tom had no stockings to darn, nor croupy children to watch, duty did not bind him to Minnow Island.

True, the Leonards' preference had been Patty. There was something about the bright-faced girl who was giving her best to her little brood that won their hearts. Besides they were fully convinced that she had unusual talent, and it would give them a new interest in life to aid that talent in its development.

And Doris—well, it was a time for battling for her. She wanted Patty, oh, so much! Yet, down in her heart, she was eagerly hoping that Patty would be brave and true to her own best self. And so, though her heart ached at the thought of separation from the girl-friend who was so much to her, she said not one word to influence Patty to change her decision. And that was Doris's little victory over self.

As we have said, Tom went with the Judge's family. One beautiful September morning, when the air was crisp with coming frost, yet mellow



AWAY WENT THE "EMPIRE STATE."

with golden sunshine, Tom stood, resplendent in a new navy-blue suit, on the deck of the "Empire State" as it left the dock of the Park. Tom's olive cheeks were glowing; the slumbrous fire in his dark eyes had flashed into flame. He was going out into the wide world—the world of wondrous sights and sweet harmonies. That day was one grand symphony for him—no discords of any sort, and the only minor chord was the thought of separation from his own folk.

Perhaps it was Patty's spirit which felt the more strongly the sweet, sad touch of minor chords, as she stood on the dock, watching the receding steamboat. Away it moved—the channel of blue water widening between its white side and the black dock. Red and blue pennants fluttered against the clear sky, the band struck up "*The girl I left behind me*"; good-bys were shouted—some merry, others with a quiver of tears in them.

Away went the stately "Empire State," growing smaller and smaller, until she looked like a white swan resting on the waters. No longer were fluttering handkerchiefs seen and the waving of hats. The notes of the band came back faintly now, and sadder with the sound of farewell.

Patty moved away from the main dock and went down to the boat-livery, where her father was waiting with the skiff. He looked anxiously at her face. Then he did something which he was not in the habit of doing—he took her in his arms as one lifts a baby and kissed her tenderly before he placed her in the boat.

"You're a good girl, Patty!" he said in a husky voice, "a good girl, and I shan't forget it!"

So they rowed back to Minnow Island, and the old life continued. The flagstaff over at Casa Valetta stood up like a gaunt gray ghost; the gay flowers along the parterres blackened into crape with the coming of frosty nights; gradually the river lost its fleet of excursion boats, jaunty naphtha launches and fishermen's trolling boats, the "Park" was like a deserted village; the big hotels on the islands looked solemn and forlorn. The season was over!

But the royal season of the year was just at hand, the beautiful autumn, when a drapery of cloth-o'-gold wrapped the shores of the river. Instead of colored lanterns, the Frost-King's torch illuminated isle and mainland. Instead of the wandering "searchlight" the great silvery moon shone down with the crystal clearness of October nights. Sumach decked the gray rocks with scarlet plumes; the red wine of woodbine was spilt over the mossy crevices; along the slopes was the white everlasting, looking like drifts of snow; near it were the purple asters and golden-rod; down by the pebbly shore were the white wool of thoroughwort and the satin puffs of wild clematis.

Patty's heart was brightened by the prodigal display of color around her. As a child, denied some great pleasure, is comforted by beautiful toys, so she grew happier as she took long walks over her island home, or, in her skiff, wandered from shore to shore, drinking in the clear air, the sunshine and the beauty around her.

These were days when her father lavished much loving appreciation upon her. Rough and uncouth, careless and indolent as he sometimes appeared, down in Ben Graham's heart was a wealth of tenderness, which Patty's sacrifice had touched and brought to the surface.

He showed it by unwonted gentleness of manner toward her, as well as by vigorous attempts at upholding her authority in all things, especially in lustily cuffing Joe and Dick when they demurred at wearing clean collars or rowing over to Sabbath school held in the little chapel at the "Park."

"Don't you know your sister Patty is trying to bring you up decent! Stop snuffling now, mosey into them trousers and learn your catechism," with much other good advice.

Thus the days drifted by—October—November. Presently all the glory faded from the trees; scarlet and yellow leaves fluttered down and lay browning in the crevices of the rocks; the river grew lead-color from the lowering sky. One day, after much sullen muttering, a great icy storm swept down from Lake Ontario. Snowflakes came—a few at first, like scouts preceding the regular army—then whole battalions—and all the green isles which had lain warm and smiling beneath the summer sun looked bare and drear, their gray rocks showing like the bones of a deserted carcass. Soon the whirling flakes covered them, and earth, sky and water were a great blur of white and gray. Thus winter settled down on Minnow Island.

But in spite of its dreariness and isolation, it

was not an altogether unhappy season for Patty. In the first place, she was very busy, and one who is well occupied need not be hopelessly sad. She saw her family improving under her watchful care, and her father's quiet content added to her own peace of mind.

Letters came every now and then from Tom, letters filled with glowing descriptions of the beautiful places he had seen, the kindness with which he was treated, and ending always with the joyous tidings of progress in his beloved music.

One morning—it was the beginning of spring and the ice had broken up in the river, a warm south wind was blowing and the crows were cawing loudly up on Maple Island—Ben Graham came bustling into the house.

“I’ve got a job to do to-day, Patty! It’s carpentering. That broker from Brooklyn, who bought Pine Island, sent word that he wants things fixed up around his place. He’s coming early this summer—that is, his family’ll be here early—and I suppose he knows what a rush there is late in the spring, and so he wants to get things started now. He’s going to put a wing on his cottage and run a piazza around on the east side. Then, too, he’s going to have the old boathouse torn down—it was nothing but an old rotting shed, anyway—and put a new one, a pagoda like the Judge’s. He’s sent the plans to me, and I am to get to work soon’s I can. If this nice weather’ll last, I’ll have a good chance to put in some work. The ‘Nancy Myers’ came over from Clayton this

morning and brought a load of lumber. So, if you'll put me up a lunch, I'll get my tools and be off."

With smiling face Patty hastened into the pantry and began cutting slices of bread and butter and cold meat. She felt very thankful that her father had been so fortunate as to secure this work; and, though she was hardly able to analyze the feeling, there was down in her heart an added joy because he, too, was pleased at the prospect of work. There had been times in the past when Ben Graham had grumbled over such opportunities; often he had shirked his work, but the events of the past year had wrought a great change in him. Patty's patience and self-denial and her cheery example had not been expended in vain.

And back of all this, too, there was that wonderful though invisible lever, the Power of the Spirit, purifying and regenerating—lifting to its proper plane the soul made in the image of God. And Patty's heart was greatly rejoiced and her daily tasks were glorified by inward peace and hope.

She rolled up the green paper shades at the pantry window. A great burst of sunshine poured in, making the old-fashioned, blue-rimmed dishes on the shelves glisten with soft, creamy light. A fly on the window-sill bestirred his rheumatic legs and crawled slowly up the pane, and then, warmed by the genial rays, fell to fluttering and bumping about giddily, while he sang a queer little buzzing song of exultation.

"Yes, spring is here, Mr. Blue-bottle!" said Patty, laughing at his antics. "Spring is almost here up on

the St. Lawrence! 'Let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof!' How pleasant it will be to see the green grass and flowers and birds again! It seems as though I was never so happy in looking forward to spring as I am this year!"

Ah, Patty, into your young life has come the grand truth that a soul in harmony with the All-Father finds no discord in nature!

"I dreaded the winter," Patty continued. "I dreaded the cold and loneliness and poverty, but God made the way clear for me; He smoothed out all difficulties, and oh, I have so many things for which to be thankful!"

Singing away, she filled the dinner-pail with bread, and meat and cheese, not forgetting to tuck in a crispy brown apple turnover. Then, throwing a shawl over her head—for the air was still keen from the melting snow and ice up northward—she ran down to the boat, into which her father had just lifted his chest of tools.

He took the tin pail from her hand, tucked it under the seat of the skiff, and then, seizing the oars, pushed off.

"It may be late before I get home this evening," he said. "I don't know but what after I quit work, if it isn't too dark, I'll row over to Fisher's Landing. I want to see a man there about a cow. Tell you what, Patty, I think it'll be nice to have a good Jersey and lots of milk and cream. And to think that I've saved up enough money to pay for her is nicer still."

"That's so!" Patty called out cheerily. Then

for a minute she stood there smiling and waving her hand, while she watched her father's boat moving farther and farther away.

Suddenly he paused an instant in his lusty strokes and with uplifted arm pointed away southward. A hearty peal of laughter came from his lips and rippled in a score of echoes across the waters.

Patty turned and looked in the direction his hand had indicated. A little frown contracted her brows; then she banished it and uttered a low, merry laugh.

A boat was coming around the point to Cone Island. It contained a huge, upright bundle of green and red plaid. Two fat arms were vigorously plying a pair of oars.

"It's Aunt Creshy Potts, and she's come to spend the day!" Patty exclaimed. "Dear me! I had planned to do lots of painting to-day, father being away and no hot dinner to get. I wanted to go up back in the woods and sketch a little scene there. Retta and the boys were going to boil sap there, and I thought we'd have a jolly time camping out till evening and coming home in the moonlight. But never mind! Ret and the twins can go, and I'll stay home and entertain Aunt Creshy. I'll do my very best to make her visit pleasant, too!"

Aunt Creshy Potts was what she prided herself upon being, a "*genooine* islander!" She had lived at the "Park" all her life; had seen the first camping-out tent erected there, and taken a personal interest in every habitation following, from the most modest cottage up to the stately villa. All these years she had earned an honest livelihood by washing and

ironing the beruffled garments of a long procession of summer sojourners.

Aunt Creshy's figure suggested one of Mrs. Stowe's dear old ladies who resembled "a feather bed tied around with a string!" Aunt Creshy's face was fat, also, and rosy like a winter apple; her eyes were black and keen, and her tongue—well, that made one think of Tennyson's "Brook"—it "went on forever!" But Aunt Creshy's gossip rarely had any malice in it. If anybody did anything bad, she talked about it, of course—how could she help talking!—but she always called the culprit a "poor fellow," and reckoned he was "sorry." Among many peculiarities, Aunt Creshy possessed one that was particularly noticeable: she did love to go "a-visiting!" So trivial a thing as a lack of invitation was never considered an obstacle by her. She liked to see people, and she never doubted in the least that they were overjoyed at seeing her. So, whenever the mood seized her, she donned her plaid shawl and big scoop-hood and started off.

She was a thoroughly independent person. In spite of her fatness and general clumsiness, she could handle an oar as well as any waterman on the St. Lawrence. To be sure, there was generally some uncertainty about her getting into the boat—they were "such wobbly critters!" she said. Besides, from the ponderous way in which she placed her number seven gaiters in the bottom of the craft, there was a suggestion of imminent danger of staving a hole in the bottom. But, when all these difficulties were once surmounted, and Aunt Creshy

safely deposited on the seat and the boat had ceased rocking, she would grasp the oars with the hands of a master and make the boat leap through the water like a most obedient steed. She could paddle, scull and manage her craft as well as any youth of the "Varsity crew," and when she passed the villas on various islands, or pulled up at the public dock, her dingy boat, gorgeous shawl, and antediluvian hood with her round ruddy face inside, attracted as much attention as the "Lady of Shalott" floating down by the towers of Camelot!

"How d'ye do, Patty?" she called out in a shrill, cheery tone as her boat bumped lightly against the Graham dock. "I ain't seen you in an age, and I thought that to-day I'd run over an' see how you an' your folks were getting along. Here, ketch the painter; I guess I'll draw up the 'Where Now?' on the dock, seein' as I'm goin' to stay all day; I don't want the swells to pound her against the timbers."

Aunt Creshy's boat had once been painted by a workman of a waggish turn of mind. With great suavity he had suggested changing the commonplace name "Sally Ann" to the very significant "Where Now?" which pleased Aunt Creshy mightily.

"Seems jest the name for a boat in which one goes a-visitin'!" she remarked blandly.

Patty steadied herself on the dock and held out a helping hand to the old woman, who, slowly, heavily and with much puffing and many mirthful ejaculations, at last stood on the platform. Then the "Where Now?" was drawn up out of reach of the

pounding waves, and Patty and her guest went up to the house.

"I've brought my patchwork," said Aunt Creshy. "Mrs. Deacon White gave me some real bright plaids and they work in beautifully. I've pieced three comfortables this winter and am on the fourth. Mrs. Dempster—she lives over at Clayton, you know—says this is the prettiest I've made. How are things going on at the Park? Oh, all right. The Peterses were all down with the 'grip,' but they're better now. The young minister that preached at the Park this year is goin' to get married. Hope they'll like his wife as well as they do him. They say she's awful nice, so I'll guess it be all right. I don't know but what—now don't say anything, for I haven't quite made up my mind about it—I'll give the young couple one of my comfortables! Say, Patty, seems as though you grewed taller every time I see you. I was noticing it at church last Sunday. And oh, my dear child, don't it seem good to have your pa come out and take a stand for the right! I always said that Ben Graham had a kind heart, and now it does seem so good to see him comin' to church, steady as a clock. J'ined, too! Well, it was what your ma hoped and prayed for—I knowed her well. And I tell you what, Patty, my dear, I'm an old woman and ain't no grammar nor education to boast of; but I know one thing, and that is, that though it may take years to bring it about, the prayers of a good woman'll always bring a blessin'!"

## CHAPTER VII.

HAVING installed Aunt Creshy in the big rocking-chair by the window, where she had a full view of the river and could see everything passing up and down it—from the dingy white, little steamboat that brought the daily mail to the Park to the black, funereal-looking line of coal-barges moving solemnly along under the guidance of a puffing tug—Patty betook herself to putting away the painting materials she had brought out in expectation of a day's work at her beloved art.

I think we may say that it was to her credit that she did it with a smile on her face. Insignificant though the victory may be that is gained in calmly laying aside work that is dear, and, instead, taking up a task that seems trivial and unsolicited, it is often a victory hard-fought for inwardly. Nevertheless, through the Master Builder, it adds another substantial brick to the Palace Beautiful of our character.

So Patty put away the sprawling easel, the heart-shaped palette, the bunch of brushes and box with shining tubes of paint. Then she hunted up a pair of trousers belonging to Grant, and, sitting down by Aunt Creshy's side, betook herself to the labor of making new waistbands.

And Aunt Creshy, surrounded by a rainbow of gay pieces of calico and gingham, sewed away, her tongue running a race with her needle—the former generally winning!

"Seems to me I smell turnips," she said presently, with an appreciative sniff. "Going to have 'em for dinner, Patty? You had them the last time I was here, and I thought I never ate nicer ones—sweet an' nutty, an' b'iled dry an' mealy, an' with plenty of butter on 'em! Yes, I remembered your turnips all winter. An'—le's see—you had lemon pie with frosting on top. That was nice, too."

Patty took the hint, and, with eyes twinkling, she laid down her unfinished waistbands and went into the pantry to make the lemon pie.

"I *was* going to have rice pudding," she said to herself, as she beat the whites of eggs for the frosting so much desired by Aunt Creshy. "But I'll make the pie instead. It's a little thing to do and it will gratify her so much. She's getting to be an old woman, Aunt Creshy is—most seventy, I guess, and she won't 'go out visiting' many more years."

Having to wait for the lemon pie to cool, made dinner later than usual; then some time was spent in lingering at the table, for, under the benign influence of toothsome dainties, Aunt Creshy's volubility was wonderfully increased. She nibbled and chatted; sipped her tea and chatted, and the whole repast was enlivened and also lengthened by vivacious post-prandial stories.

When she rose from the table, Aunt Creshy hovered over it like a plump, bright-eyed robin in

the act of pulling up a luscious worm. Then her fat arm was outstretched and she took a couple of cookies from the plate and also a piece of cake.

"These are nice and fresh," she exclaimed approvingly. "I guess I'll take a bit for George Iry. I'd like to take him a piece of the pie, too, but the frosting being on 'll make it liable to squosh!" The twins nudged each other under the sheltering drapery of the tablecloth. Their respective mouths widened under grins that, however, contracted immediately under their sister's reproving frown. Nevertheless, they were filled with inward glee. They had expected to see an exhibition of Aunt Creshy's providence for "George Iry." She always thought of him when she was out visiting. She never seemed to realize that George Ira, her youngest born, had grown up to be a burly, six-foot man with long beard and deep bass voice. To her he was always a little boy fond of "a piece" or a "sweetie." Like a dear, provident, old mother-bird, she always had some worm to take home to him.

It was late in the afternoon before the dishes were washed and Patty sat down to resume the button-holes in the new waistbands. Aunt Creshy was not so loquacious now. The good dinner had made her drowsy. She fell to nodding and nodding, and presently her chin sank lower and lower on its pink, fleshy terraces; the pieces of patchwork fluttered from her lap like pink, blue, purple and yellow butterflies, and she dropped into a genuine doze.

Patty smiled to herself, inwardly grateful for this brief respite. The house was quite still. Retta

and the twins had carried out the plan of going "maple-sugaring" up in the woods back of the house, at the upper end of the island. Dick and Joe accompanied them. As they had not started until after dinner, they were to stay longer and would walk home, following the smooth shore-line, the moon, which rose early that evening, showing them the way.

Aunt Creshy dozed on, and presently Patty laid down her sewing and went out into the back-yard to see to a brood of young chickens. She was just closing up the coop for the night, when a shrill voice was heard calling from the house.

"Dear me! what can be the matter with Aunt Creshy? Has she tried to light the lamp and upset it!" Patty murmured anxiously, as she hastily ran indoors.

But Aunt Creshy was all right. She stood by the front window, eagerly peering out.

"Come right here, Patty, child!" she exclaimed. "I want you to look over there!"

Her fat forefinger, trembling from excitement, was pointed toward the little island lying quietly wrapped in the gray of the waters and the purple mantle of the fast-falling twilight—the island on which stood Casa Valetta, Judge Leonard's stately villa.

"Don't you see something?" Aunt Creshy exclaimed in quavering tones. Patty's heart gave a great leap.

She did see something! The towers and turrets of the beautiful villa stood up darkly outlined against the amethyst sky; no danger menaced them.

But from one of the rear rooms came little gleams of light that were not reflections from the yellow sunset. Little, wicked-looking, reddish gleams they were, like greedy tongues, ready to lap and to eat!

"It's a fire!" Patty gasped. "Oh, what shall we do! what shall we do!"

"Now don't get flustered, child—'tain't no time to do that! Somethin' can be done, I guess. Fire hain't got much headway yet! It's jest in the back *end* where the woodshed an' tool-room is. You see I know all about the place—I went there a-visitin' one day last summer; the jedge's wife, she treated me real handsome. How that fire got started beats all! Somebody's keerlessness, I guess. I seen a boat with sportsmen land there this afternoon. I s'pose they cooked their dinner there, and maybe didn't put the fire out as they had orter! It's a mercy it rained yesterday or the whole house'd been a-blaze 'fore now. There! I can see more flames creeping up! Something ought to be done right away!"

"Maybe I can put it out," said Patty. "Oh, I wish Retta and the boys were here. But see here, Auntie, I'll row over to Casa Valetta and see what I can do!"

A few minutes later Patty was rowing rapidly across the darkening waters to the judge's island.

Reaching it, she drew up the boat, fastened it, and, seizing the two buckets she had brought with her filled them with water and hurried as rapidly as she could with her burden up the path leading to the back door.

There was a pungent smell in the air—the odor of burning wood, and from one end of the shed came a slowly increasing volume of smoke. There was a subdued roaring inside, broken at times by sharp cracklings and snappings.

A blackened circle outside the door where a little heap of ashes lay, mingled with scattered clamshells and sundry bones and crusts showed the place where careless sportsmen had built their fire and eaten their dinner in the shelter of the angle of the building. Doubtless, after their departure, the wind had fanned the coals, a few surrounding chips and twigs had caught fire, which had thus eaten its way under the lattice-work of the shed, where it had found material on which to feed abundantly.

Fortunately, Patty had the key with her. The Judge always left the keys at the Grahams when he departed for the city, and it had been Ben Graham's duty to go over to pay an occasional visit to Casa Valetta and examine the premises.

Patty opened the shed door.

A warm breath smote her cheeks; a volley of red, whirling sparks shot out.

Seizing her pails she ran in and pressing her back against the door to close it, lest outside draughts should fan the flames, she threw, half-blinded by the smoke as she was, her two pailfuls of water in the direction where the glare seemed brightest. Then she rushed out again and ran down to the river for more water.

How many times she did this she could never tell! Desperation lent her energy. Back and forth she

toiled, her face and hands blackened by smoke, and her garments scorched by the greedy flames. Every time she tossed the water, there was an angry hissing, a dying down of the red flames and a smothering cloud of smoke and vapor. But every time she came staggering up the hill with her brimful pails, she found that the fire had renewed its zeal—and thus the fight went on.

Heart and voice were lifted in a prayer for strength and victory. She would not give up—she *couldn't* give up! She thought of the kind, old judge and his wife and of Doris—all who had been so kind to her! How could she let their beautiful home be burned down before her eyes! No, she must work on till she conquered the cruel enemy.

Presently cheer came to her, for the lurid gleams seemed really to subside, and the blackness and moisture of the shed increased. Inch by inch she had fought the flames, and, though rebellious, they had finally retreated before her.

But, as for the last time she came up with laden pails, slowly now, and with panting breath, for fatigue and excitement were beginning to tell on her, she chanced to glance toward the ceiling of the shed. Alas! what did she see!

There was a little loft overhead, and the dusty cobwebs hanging down must have been licked at by the flames, for sparks of fire were trembling here and there among the rafters—last remnants of the conflagration, but none the less dangerous for that.

“Oh, if the fire gets headway up there, all is lost!”

Patty exclaimed, half sobbing. "There is a little hay up there at the farther end, where the hens used to have their nests. It'll go like tinder!" Frantic with dread, she groped around among the charred wood in the shed until her hands touched a ladder lying there.

She propped it up against the rafters and began to ascend. But as her feet touched its lower round, the latter, crumbling, broke—the fire had charred it. The second round, though creaking ominously, bore her weight and up she mounted, carrying one pail.

The smoke, after its fashion, had risen to the loft and choked and blinded her, but she made her way bravely to the scarlet threads of flame, tossed on the water and retreated.

She brought up the second pail. That and the first were apparently successful in entirely extinguishing the fire, but Patty was not quite satisfied.

"I'll go down to the river and bring up some more water so as to be sure no sparks are remaining," she said.

She turned to go down the ladder, but found herself strangely tremulous from fatigue and excitement. Somehow—she could never tell *how* it happened—the handle of one of the pails caught on the end of the ladder, and, in extricating it, she lost her balance—she and the unsteady ladder fell heavily into the black, wet, smoke-begrimed depths!

## CHAPTER VIII.

AUNT CRESHY stood in the doorway of the cottage at Minnow Island, and her round face wore a look of great perplexity.

She glanced down toward the river upon the gray surface of which Patty's boat was no longer seen, and then, looking up toward the trees growing at the other end of the island, she said, "I wish Retty an' the boys'd come; then there'd be more of us to help. I expect, though, that they'll stay up there a while longer—it's hard to tear boys away from anything like maple sugar; an' as fur Retty, I guess she'd about as soon be there as here. She never was no hand to entertain me like Patty is, and I kind of guess she likes to kite off out of the way when I come visitin'! Don't know as I blame her—a fat, humbly, old woman like me ain't much company for a sprightly young girl! Only Patty puts up with me an' treats me as well as she would the Queen of Sheby! But as for Patty—bless the girl's heart!—I don't know what she's goin' to do now!

"I'd go over to the jedge's place and help her, but land! I'm that clumsy I couldn't do anything! Patty'd have to bother to haul me up the steps

from the dock; steps always put me out of breath! Yet I can't bear to think of her over there alone. Who knows what may happen to the poor dear! She's that kind that when anything's to be done, she rushes right in with no heed to herself. I wish her pa was here. I don't know but what—yes, I guess I just will!" and Aunt Creshy's voice took on a sudden firmness.

She turned into the house, trotted quickly into the spare bedroom and donned her hood and shawl. Then, going down to the dock with a speed that surprised even herself, she shoved her boat off the slanting planks. This feat was accomplished with much puffing and many ejaculations.

When the skiff finally settled into the water with a soft little *pat* that sent circling eddies around its bow, Aunt Creshy paused an instant to mop her red, perspiring face with the corner of her apron, after which, with a mighty sigh of doubt as to the result, she stepped down into the boat, steady-ing herself as well as she could, in spite of its wild waltzings, and when both she and her craft had calmed down a little, pushed off from the island. When once safely afloat, her self-possession was restored, and she rowed away with bold, swift strokes.

More than once she looked hesitatingly toward Valetta Island, then shook her head, as if answering negatively some mental question. "No, it won't do!" she at last spoke out. "I can't help her—but I kin go an' *git* help!"

She rowed briskly away in the direction of Pine

Island, the wooded crest of which rose dark against the far-away horizon.

All the glory of the sunset had faded from the mirror of the waters. Aunt Creshy—brave soul!—began to feel somewhat timorous.

"I hope it won't get dark too quick, before I get somebody to come an' help! I guess George Iry'd feel worried if he knowed what his ma was doin'! But I've got to do it! Le' me see, I guess this is the shortest cut over to Pine Island where Patty said her pa was at work. Seems to me I have heard that there was a shoaly place between here and there. I hope I shan't run ag'in' a rock! I can't see very good; I forgot my *specs*. But my land! there ain't no use in borryin' trouble. The '*Where Now*' 's always been a lucky boat, and besides, as I am goin' on an errand o' mercy, I guess a merciful Providence 'll look out for me!"

Aunt Creshy's trust was not in vain. Half way over to Pine Island, her dim eyes caught sight of something that appeared like a black rock sticking up out of the water, and while she held off cautiously she saw it move; then there was the silvery gleam of dipping oars, and presently, even without the aid of the lamented "*specs*," the dear old woman saw that it was Ben Graham himself homeward bound. It took some little time for him to understand the true situation. Aunt Creshy, wrought up to a high nervous pitch, was rather incoherent in her explanations.

There was a confused mingling\* of "*Casa Valetta*"

—"maple sugar"—"twins"—"fire!"—and Ben's heart throbbed in great fear at the bare imagination of Grant and Meade consumed in flames.

But soon he fully understood, and tying his boat to the "*Where Now*" he rowed with right good-will toward Casa Valetta.

Every now and then he and his companion glanced anxiously toward the latter place.

Its quaint, irregular roof still loomed up dark against the sky. No lurid gleams were to be seen.

"She may have put it out," panted Aunt Creshy, for she also was rowing hard. "But we can't tell till we get round the bend an' see the back part where the fire was startin'. I smell smoke still"—as the boat bumped against the dock at Valetta Island.

"Patty! Patty!" she called in shrill tones that echoed far across the waters. "Why don't the child answer!"

Ben Graham sent forth a mighty shout.

Still no response!

"I hope the dear child ain't hurt!" quavered Aunt Creshy, and overcome by excitement and suspense, she began to cry softly to herself. Ben Graham set his teeth hard together. He was more frightened than he dared to own at the ominous silence.

One thing, however, somewhat allayed his fears. The fire at Casa Valetta was checked—that was apparent, for not a red gleam was visible. But may not his child, overcome by the smoke, have been suffocated?

He pulled Aunt Creshy out of the boat—using little ceremony. “Histed me as if I was a beef critter!” as the old lady afterwards said with many a chuckle.

They hurried up the path leading to the rear of the house, around which still lingered stray spiral coils of smoke.

Ben Graham had his lantern lighted. “Lucky I had it with me,” as he afterwards said. “I had taken it with me when I went to work that day because I expected to go over to Fisher’s Landing in the evening after my job was done; but something made me change my mind—I suppose some folks might call it chance, but I call it *the Lord!*” reverently—“and when I was through work, I up and put for home, and so met old Aunt Creshy!”

The lantern was lighted and proved a great aid in discovering the whereabouts of Patty. Ben Graham turned its rays into the black, smoky shed and he and his companion uttered a simultaneous exclamation as they beheld the prostrate form lying by the fallen ladder.

Thrusting the lantern into Aunt Creshy’s hand, Ben Graham sprang forward to lift his daughter.

“Poor Patty! it’s just as I feared!” he groaned. “She’s fallen here and been smothered by the smoke!”

But he was mistaken. Lying on the floor, there had come to Patty from the crack under the door a current of pure, fresh air that counteracted the foul air of the smoky interior. But the shock of

the fall, and a sprained ankle resulting thereby, had caused her to faint.

Once out in the open air, she soon revived, and perhaps the happiest moment in her father's life was when she looked up into his face and smiled. A weak, pitiful little smile it was, to be sure, that illumined her wan, smoke-begrimed face—but it was very sweet to him.

As for Aunt Creshy, she fairly jumped for joy; and though her motions could not exactly be called graceful, they were indicative of gratitude and genuine elation.

"Patty Graham! *you are* the bravest little critter!" she exclaimed over and over again.

"I think *you* are the brave one!" said Patty. "As for myself, I know I was awfully frightened when I heard the wood crackling and saw the smoke and flames. Fire is an awful thing! I felt so helpless! More than once I was ready to give up—my arms ached so carrying the heavy pails! Then I prayed—'O dear Lord! do help me! do give me strength to carry some more!'—and he did—He always does!"—and Patty closed her eyes wearily, but with a sweet peace on her face.

Ben Graham tore off his coat and spread it on the ground for his daughter to lie on.

"I'll leave you just a minute or two, my dear," he said tenderly. "I want to pour a few more pailfuls of water on the shed—not that I really think it needs it, but just to make sure that there won't be any chance of the fire starting up again. Then I'll come back and carry you down to the boat, and

when we get you home we'll fix that ankle of yours. Aunt Creshy's about as good a doctor as any one I know of in these parts."

"I'll put applications of hot water on it jest as soon's we get home," said Aunt Creshy, with a professional air, as she tucked the coat close around Patty's little figure.

A few minutes later the three were down at the dock embarking for home. Patty, lying at the bottom of one boat, was towed by the other, which was rowed by her father and Aunt Creshy. As Ben Graham coiled up the painter of his skiff before taking up his oars, his attention was drawn to a small, humpy-looking parcel lying on the seat.

"What's this?" he inquired.

Aunt Creshy made a grab for it, saying with shrill laughter, "My stars! if there ain't the ginger cookies and piece of cake I was savin' for George Iry! Howsomever it got there I don't know! I laid it in the bedroom near my hood and shawl, so's I shouldn't forgit it when I went home, an' I s'pose I must have grabbed it up in a kind of absentminded way! Land! what things folks'll do when they are excited! and the cake ain't mussed a bit!" as she undid the parcel.

A little ripple of laughter came from the rear boat, showing that Patty must have heard this dialogue and been amused in spite of the twinges of her sprained ankle.

Her father, smiling at the merry voice, paused long enough from his rowing to call out,

"I don't know but I ought to cheer you up still more, Patty mine! I got good news to-day! It'll be pleasant for you to think about. There was a man told me to-day that there was a talk of appointing me inspector at Blankville. That'll bring me double the income I have now. Seems as though things were getting brighter for us, doesn't it, Patty girlie!"

And, sounding softly above the lapping of the water against the sides of the boats, floated a girlish voice:

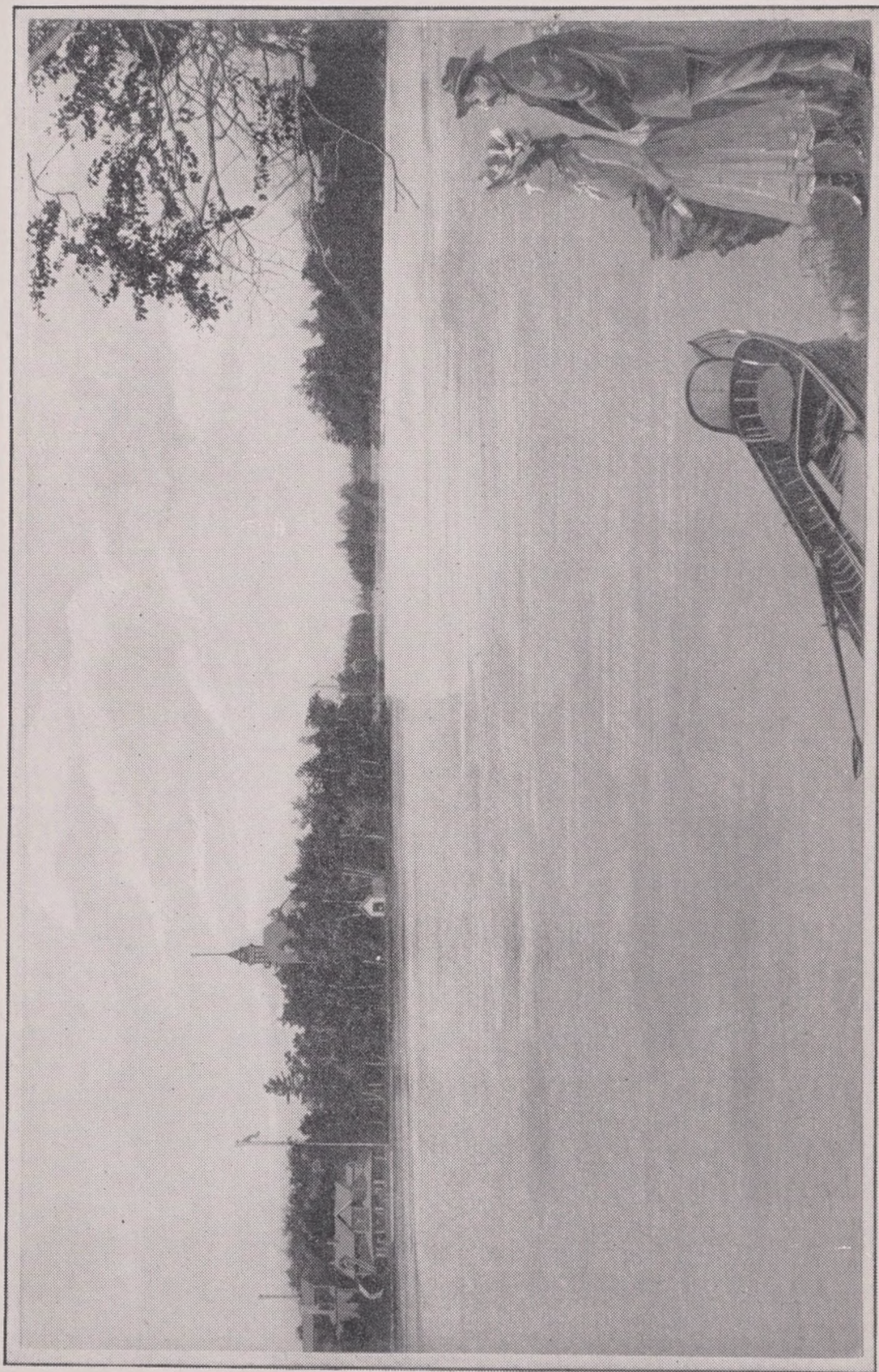
*"Can I doubt his tender mercy  
Who through life has been my guide!"*

It was Patty singing in happy fashion to her weary yet grateful little self.

Home was soon reached, much to the relief of all parties, not forgetting Retta and the boys, who, having in the dusk of evening come home from their sugaring, were greatly astonished at finding the house deserted.

Under Aunt Creshy's assiduous care Patty's ankle soon became better, and after a restful night she was enabled to discuss with her father his prospective good fortune in gaining the inspectorship of Blankville.

But, as the old saying has it, "it never rains but it pours," and it happened that ere he accepted this offer another came, different in kind and far more advantageous in every way. It was contained in a letter sent by Doris Leonard to her friend Patty,



“O FATHER, IT’S WISEST TO TRUST GOD, ISN’T IT!”

and the close of the letter—and of our story—ran as follows:

“You know, dear Patty, how I have wanted you with me, and how I have puzzled my brains to find a way so that you need not be separated from those so dependent upon you. And a way has come! After our travels we expect to settle down, for a time, at least, in our home at Fairview—just out of New York City. It is the most beautiful of all uncle’s estates—a grand old place. The old lodge-keeper has just died and his house and situation are vacant. It is just the place for you and your father. Cranbray and Rasp’s large fruit farm joins our place, and the boys will have a chance to earn some money picking berries. Then there are good schools near by—and of course you want the lads to have a good education—you and I have talked about that so often. As for yourself, Patty dear, there’ll be a fine chance. Uncle says he’ll never rest contented until he has an opportunity of balancing his account with you in the matter of your saving dear Casa Valetta from being burned to the ground! You dear, brave girl! how can we ever forget it! Uncle is planning to have you go twice or three times a week into the city and take lessons from one of the very best artists. You see we’ve made all the arrangements—uncle, auntie and I—and of course Tom has been consulted, too. And I know you want to see dear little Tom. He isn’t so very little, though, now—he is growing finely and is the picture of health. You will be surprised when you hear him play!

"But I shan't dare go into the wonders of Tom's playing, or this letter would be too long. What I want now is to tell you to make yourself ready to come to Fairview. The lodge is very comfortably furnished, so you need not bring many things. Uncle has written to your father, giving him particulars of the offer, and now, hoping to see you soon, I am, as ever,

"Your loving Doris."

"O father!" said Patty, as, two weeks later, she stood down on the shore and for the last time—for all the Grahams were to start for Fairview on the next day—watched the bright shield of the sunset make its shining reflection in the crystal waters, "O father, it's always wisest to trust God, isn't it! And the sweetest things and the best things are those that come after patient waiting! And there is never any sting to them!"

"I guess that's so," said Ben Graham, and then he added, looking far across the shining waters, as though his eyes sought an unseen shore—"seems 's though Sarah—your ma—had been kind of watching over us! If she *is*, I know she's pleased with you, child—I'm sure of that!"

THE END.

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